

L E T T E R S

T O

D R . H O R S L E Y ,

P A R T II.

LETTERS

TO

DR. HORSLEY,

PART II.

CONTAINING

FARTHER EVIDENCE

THAT THE

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN CHURCH WAS UNITARIAN.

By JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D.F.R.S.

— Ubi sunt ingentia magni
Verba viri? —

OVID.

BIRMINGHAM,

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MDCCLXXXIV.

LETTERS

DEAR SIR

I have the honor

to acknowledge

the receipt of your letter

of the 10th inst.

in relation to the matter

of the 10th inst.

I am, Sir, very

truly, Sir, your

obedient servant

Yours, Sir, very

truly, Sir, your

obedient servant

I am, Sir, very

THE
P R E F A C E.

I AM truly concerned, that the discussion which I have entered into, of the historical evidence of the doctrine of the primitive ages concerning the person of Christ, has not taken the amicable turn that I proposed, and of which I gave a specimen in my former series of *Letters to Dr. Horsley*. Those were strictly argumentative, and likewise uniformly respectful. But as *his Letters*, in answer to me, are written in a style that is far from corresponding to mine, as the reader must perceive in every page, to reply to him in the same respectful manner in which I first wrote, would have been unnatural and absurd. In the present publication, therefore, I have taken the liberty to treat him with more freedom.

As he has declared that he will make no farther reply to me, I imagine that this publication will close the present controversy; and I hope it will not have been without its use, in promoting the cause of truth, though I am persuaded it would have answered this end still more effectually, if my proposal of a perfectly amicable discussion, and also that of bringing it to its proper termination, had been accepted.

I am now proceeding with my larger *History of the state of opinions concerning Christ in the primitive times*. But to execute this work as I wish to do it, and consistently with my other engagements and pursuits, will require a considerable time, hardly less than two or three years. Nor will my readers wonder at this, when I inform them, that I am determined to examine for myself every thing that has been written by any christian writer for the first five or six centuries after Christ, with the single view of collecting from them whatever I can find to throw light on this particular subject. After this examination, in which I have
already

already made considerable progress, I shall carefully attend to whatever the most respectable *modern writers* have advanced on this subject; and I shall then compose the work with all the circumspection that I am capable of; introducing into it any thing that I shall think proper from my different publications in this controversy (which I consider as only answering a temporary purpose) and then abandon it to the censures of my critics; and I hope there will not be wanting abler men than Dr. Horsley, to discover, and correct, whatever imperfections may, after all, be found in it.

I will not rashly commit myself with respect to the issue of an enquiry of this extent, and that is not yet completed; but I can assure my readers, that I see the most abundant cause to be satisfied with every thing of consequence that I have advanced in this controversy; and that I am able to produce much additional evidence for every article of it, as well as a variety of other matter relating to the subject, which will

throw light on the opinions, and turn of thinking, in early times.

Among other particulars, I shall examine as thoroughly as I can, those platonic notions concerning God, and the general system of things, which prepared the way for the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and of the trinity; shewing how they were understood, and how far they were adopted, by the christian writers. In the mean time, having long given a good deal of attention to the subject, I will venture to say, that from what Dr. Horsley has dropped concerning Platonism, as well as from the admiration he has expressed of it, he understands very little of the matter.

As I now consider this controversy as closed, it is probable that till my larger work be printed, the public will hear no more from me on this subject. But if any thing more plausible than has yet been urged should appear, I shall have an opportunity of noticing it in the *Theological Repository*,

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postory, which I hope soon to open again; and if any person will give his name, and propose any difficulty whatever relating to the present discussion, so that I shall see reason to think that it proceeds from a love of truth, and a desire of information, I here promise that I will speak fully to it, and I shall be as explicit as I possibly can. But to be more so than I have hitherto been, is impossible. Such as I have been, the public shall always find me. I have no reserve or concealment with respect to myself, and I shall always endeavour to preserve as much candour as possible with regard to others. But if I have been addicted to the *artifices* and *deceits* that Dr. Horsley so vehemently accuses me of, and if I have actually practised them to the age of fifty, I shall hardly lay them aside now. Let the public, therefore, be upon their guard against me, and “watch me as narrowly” as he says, p. 39, is necessary. Great changes in *character* and *habit* seldom take place at my age.

In this larger work, on which I am now employed, I find myself, in a great measure

upon new ground. At least, I see reason to think that it has never been sufficiently examined by any person who has had the same general views of things that I have. Dr. Lardner, who was as much conversant with the early christian writers as perhaps any man whatever, and whose sentiments on the subject of this controversy were the same with mine, yet had another object in reading them. When I applied to him for some assistance, it was too near the close of his life; and the few hints with which he did furnish me, related wholly to the doctrine of *atonement*, on which he had before published a small tract of mine.

Przypcövius wrote upon this subject, but what he has advanced is very short, and very imperfect. What Zuicker did, I can only learn from Bishop Bull, who had not seen all his works; but I suspect that he was not master of all the evidence that may be procured from a careful reading of ancient writers, and a comparison of the several circumstances to be collected from them; and

it certainly requires no small degree of patience, as well as judgment and sagacity, to trace the real state of the unitarian christians in early times from the writings of their enemies only. For all their own writings are either grossly interpolated, or have perished, except the *Clementines*, which is a work of great curiosity, and has not yet been sufficiently considered. But a candid reader will make allowance for this great disadvantage, which, as the historian of the unitarians, I must labour under. Who is there that will pretend to collect from the Roman historians only, a complete account of the affairs of the Carthaginians, the maxims of their conduct, and the motives of their public transactions, especially in relation to those things with respect to which we know that they mutually accused each other?

The *Clementines* (of which the *Recognitions* is little more than another edition) was probably written about the time of Justin Martyr. It is properly a *theological romance*, and a fine composition of its kind. The

author was perhaps too proud of his abilities as a writer; but his work is certainly superior to any thing that is now extant of that age, the writings of Justin Martyr by no means excepted. It abounds with curious circumstances relating to the customs and opinions of the times; and on that account it is strongly recommended by Cotelarius, the editor. He says, that
 “ though it abounds with trifles and errors,
 “ which had their source in a half christian
 “ philosophy, and heresy, especially that
 “ of the Ebionites, it may be read with
 “ advantage, both on account of the ele-
 “ gance of the stile, and the various learn-
 “ ing that it contains, and likewise for the
 “ better understanding the doctrine of the
 “ first heretics*.”

It is remarkable, not only that the author of this work, writing in the names of Peter

* Et vero quæ damus *Clementina*, licet nugis, licet erroribus scatent, a semichristiana philosophia, et hæresi, præcipue Ebionitica, profectis, non sine fructu tamen legentur, tum propter elegantiam sermonis, tum multiplicis doctrinæ causa, tum denique ad melius cognoscenda primarum Hæresion dogmata. *Preface.*

and

and Clement, makes them unitarians, but, that in a great variety of theological discussions upon nice subjects (in which every thing relating to the doctrine of the Gnostics, as it then stood, is minutely treated) there is no appearance of his having so much as heard of the doctrine of the *personification of the logos*, or of *the divinity or pre-existence of Christ*, in any other form than that of the Gnostics, except in some particular expressions, which Cotelarius supposes to be the interpolations of some Arian. It is probable, therefore, that though some of the works of Justin Martyr might perhaps have been extant when this writer was employed about his, they were but little known, or his opinions might have been adopted by few persons only.

Now this writer, whose knowledge of the state of opinions in his time cannot be questioned, would hardly have represented Peter and Clement as unitarians, if he had not thought them to be such. Nay, it may be inferred from the view that he has given of their principles, that, supposing
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the doctrine of the trinity to have existed in his time, yet that Peter, Clement, and consequently the great body of christians in the apostolic age, were *generally thought* to have been unitarians, as he must have imagined that this circumstance would contribute to the credibility of his narrative. A writer who personates another, will be as careful as he can to ascribe to him no opinions but such as are commonly supposed to be his; for without this the imposition, if any such was intended, could not answer his purpose. But I much question whether any serious imposition was really intended by this writer. The farther consideration of this subject, however, I reserve for my larger work.

To return from this digression, I shall observe, that, as to the learned christians of the last age (excepting the Athanasians) they were almost all Arians, such as Dr. Whitby, Dr. Clarke, Mr. Whiston, Mr. Jackson, Mr. Pierce, &c. In their time, it was a great thing to prove that the doctrine of the perfect equality of the Son to the
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the Father, in all divine perfections, was not the doctrine of the early ages. Those writers could not, indeed, help perceiving traces of the doctrine of the *simple humanity of Christ*; but taking it for granted that this was an opinion concerning him as much *too low*, as that of the Athanasians was *too high*, and there being no distinguished advocates for the proper unitarian doctrine in their time, they did not give sufficient attention to the circumstances relating to it. These circumstances it will be my business to collect, and to compare; and, situated as I am, it may be depended upon, that I shall do it with all the circumspection of which I am capable.

Notwithstanding the fullness of my own persuasion, I am far from being sanguine in my expectations with respect to others, even from the strongest evidence that I can produce, of the primitive christians having been universally, or very generally, unitarians. Though there do not appear to be so many learned Arians at present as there were thirty or forty years ago, yet I am
well

well aware that the impression made by their writings is such, as that those persons who have now the most reputation for theological literature (having, in fact, been their disciples) are very generally of their opinion, as I myself formerly was; and therefore that there is at present, as might well be expected, a general prepossession against me among the more learned christians, with respect to this argument.

I am also not so ignorant of history, or of human nature, as not to be sensible, that *time* is requisite to make any considerable change even in the opinions of the learned, though it certainly requires more time to produce an equal change in those of the unlearned; and with respect to most persons who are advanced in life, it is hardly to be expected from any force of argument. But in the last ten years a very great change has been made in the opinions of those who have given much attention to theological matters, and the number of unitarians is greatly increased. A learned Trinitarian is almost a phenomenon in this country,

country, and learned Arians are much fewer than they have been*. And when the *historical arguments* in favour of proper unitarianism, which have hitherto been very much overlooked, shall be duly attended to, especially that which arises from the consideration of the great body of the common people among christians having thought that Christ was simply *a man inspired of God*, and their having had no knowledge of his *pre-existence*, the conclusion that such a general persuasion must have been derived from the apostles having taught no other doctrine, will not easily be avoided. It will also weigh much with those who are apt to lay great stress on the usual construction of some *particular texts*, to consider, that, in those early times, the scriptures were constantly read by persons better qualified to understand the language of them than

* By a *learned Trinitarian or Arian*, I do not mean a man who has merely classical literature, any more than mathematical or philosophical knowledge; but one who, having a competent knowledge of the learned languages, has made *theology and ecclesiastical history* his principal study. And I much question whether this has been the case with Doctor Horsley.

we at this time can pretend to be, without suggesting any such notions of the divinity, or the pre-existence of Christ, as are now supposed to be clearly contained in them. When these, I say, and other similar arguments, shall have had time to operate, they will, I am confident, meet with less obstruction continually, and produce a still greater change in ten years to come.

As the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ came in with philosophical and speculative people, and required many centuries, and those years of gross darkness, before it laid firm hold on the minds of the common people, it will certainly remain a long time with them; and a disposition to accommodate to these will likewise operate to quicken the zeal of many teachers of christianity in its defence. This will, no doubt, protract the æra of reformation, towards which the enlightened friends of christianity look forwards with confidence and joy, to a more distant period.

In

In the mean time, it is a great satisfaction to reflect, that, whatever difficulties may lie in the way of truth, no proper effort to remove them can be without its effect. So regular are the laws of nature, respecting even the human mind, and the influences to which it is exposed, that no endeavours to instruct or reform the world can be wholly lost. Like seed thrown into the ground, they may *seem* to be lost, but in due time, if the soil be good, and other circumstances favourable (and for these things, we, who scatter our seed promiscuously, must take our chance) the harvest will, in its proper season, be abundant. This consideration should encourage all the labourers in the great field of mankind to *plow in hope*, and to *sow in hope*; that, if not we, at least our posterity, may *become partakers of our hope*. 1 Cor. ix. 10.

I can already perceive that several persons of more ingenuous dispositions among my Arian friends are much struck with some of the circumstances which I have brought to light, and others have had their objections completely removed; so that

that I am not without hope that a much greater number will think as I now do, when my *larger work* shall be published; especially if a sufficient degree of attention be excited to the subject. In this view I am truly thankful for what has already been done by Dr. Horsley, and the Monthly Reviewers, and on this account I sincerely wish that their credit and influence were more considerable and extensive than they are. This opposition, and the effect of it abroad, will contribute to make the controversy better known; and though the truth may be borne down for a time, it will be the more firmly established in consequence of it, in the end. It is like sinking a piece of cork, which, with the greater force it is plunged under water, with the greater force and celerity it will recover its natural place. It is with great tranquility and satisfaction that I look forward towards this period; and I should not be qualified to appear before the public at all, if, in the mean time, I could not look upon such an opposition as I have hitherto experienced with a mixture of indifference and contempt.

When

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When this investigation shall be completely finished, it will, probably, be matter of surprize to many, that it was not sooner discovered, that the unitarians *must have been*, and certainly *were*, the great body of common christians till after the council of Nice. It may even be said, that there was very little merit indeed, in proving a thing so extremely obvious, and that many other persons had proved it quite as well before. I shall, if I live to see it, rejoice in this change of opinion, let who will have contributed to it.

In the mean time, what is all the opposition that a man can meet with, from whatever persons, and in whatever form it be carried on, when weighed against the full conviction of his own mind, arising from a fair and careful examination? And with respect to the judgment of the Public, the effect of any mode of opposition is only temporary. What did the unqualified approbation of all the defenders of a pretended *common sense*, by the Monthly Reviewers of that day, do for the doctrine?

Has it now any advocates? Those Reviewers quote, without the least suspicion of any thing amiss, even Dr. Oswald's refutation of the only satisfactory argument for the being of a God, viz. from the consideration of *cause and effect*. But what has it availed in the issue? And what signified the rancour with which they treated my defence of the true common sense against the spurious one? Though much admired in its day, it has not been in their power to rescue it from oblivion.

Though Dr. Horsley is determined to make no reply to me (and, indeed, unless he was better informed with respect to this subject, it is more advisable for him to leave the field to abler writers) he is accountable to the Public for misleading them, as he has done with respect to *facts* in ancient history, and for his defamation of the illustrious dead; as well as for his want of common candour, and his misrepresentations as to the living. If he be an honest man, and of an ingenuous mind, he must, in some mode

or

or other, either refute this charge; or acknowledge the justness of it. He says, with respect to me, p. 6. "A writer of whom it is once proved that he is ill informed upon his subject, has no right to demand a farther hearing." To which of us two the observation best applies, let others judge. When he has read these *Letters* (if he should think proper to read them at all) he will, I presume, be a little better informed than he is at present; and then I shall have no objection to his having another hearing, but I shall not think myself bound to reply.

As to the Monthly Reviewer, Mr. Badcock, if he should ever really study the subject of this controversy (which it is evident enough he has not done yet) he will find that he is mistaken with respect to every part of it; and if ever he comes to reflect upon his conduct in this business in a moral light, he will feel more than I should wish him, or any man to do, except for his own good.

I shall close this preface with reminding the reader, that he should carefully distinguish with respect to the importance of the different articles that are now the subject of discussion. To prevent any material mistake of this kind, I published a small pamphlet, intitled, *A General View of the Arguments for the Unity of God, and against the Divinity and Pre-existence of Christ, from Reason, from the Scriptures, and from History*; that when any advantage should be gained, either by myself, or my antagonists, it might be seen at once what the amount of it really was, and be estimated accordingly. To this small piece, and especially the *Maxims of historical Criticism*, contained in it, and in my former *Letters to Dr. Horsley*, I wish that particular attention may be given in the course of this controversy, whether carried on by myself or others.

Large works, particularly of the historical kind, were never yet known to be free from mistakes. The subject of my *History*

of

of the Corruptions of Christianity was so complex, and my attention was of course divided among such a variety of different articles, and the materials were collected at the distance of so many years, that I really wonder that it has escaped, so well as it has done; not one mistake having been discovered in it, that at all affects my general design. What are all the errors put together compared to that gross one which I have shewn Mosheim and Dr. Horsley to have fallen into; and yet the credit of Mosheim's history will not be materially affected by it on the whole? It is a work that I shall not scruple to quote myself, as I may have occasion, making due allowance for the author's peculiar prejudices. The candid reader will make the same allowance for me. Time, however, will shew what the oversights have been. These will, of course, be corrected, and what remains will stand the firmer on that account.

Though I cannot say to Dr. Horsley, as he does to me, p. 9. "I should have more than a single remark to make on
b 3 "almost

“almost every sentence of every one of your
“ten letters,” it would have been easy for
me, from the materials that I have already
collected, to have extended this publication
to a much greater length. But I do not
chuse, in these temporary pieces, to forestal
my larger work; though I think it may be
of use to produce so much of what I have
collected, as may tend to excite a more ge-
neral attention to the subject, and invite
others to engage in the same inquiry; that
when I do publish that work, I may find
more readers properly prepared to judge of
it than there appear to be at present. For
that there are at present those who are not
thus prepared, there cannot be a clearer
indication, than that the writings of Mr.
Badcock and Dr. Horsley in this contro-
versy have found admirers. Indeed, if I
had not had the object above-mentioned,
and also thought that their animadversions
gave me a good opportunity of producing
additional evidence for what I had advanced
in my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*,
I should not have troubled myself with re-
plying to their objections, or abuse. If I
had

had left all their darts sticking in my buckler, they would not have retarded my progress.

At all events, I wish the most rigorous investigation of this subject to proceed, whatever may be the consequence with respect to my opinions, or myself; as I can sincerely adopt the prayer of Ajax, quoted by me in my first controversy with Dr. Brown.

Ποικρον δ' αἰθρην, δὸς δ' ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ἰδεῖσθαι,

Εν δὲ φάει χ' ὀλισσεν.

Hom. II. Lib. xvii. v. 646.

Give me but day, let light the truth disclose;
Though *me* its beams confound, and not *my* foes.

Since the whole of this treatise was sent to the press, I have seen a posthumous piece of Dr. Lardner's, just published, intitled, *Four Discourses on Phil.* ii. 4. --- 12. which I cannot omit this opportunity of most earnestly recommending to all my readers. It is written with that simplicity and modesty which distinguish all his writ-

ings; and I should think it cannot fail to make a great impression on those whose minds are at all open to conviction, in favour of the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ. This he generally calls the *Nazarean*, and sometimes the *Unitarian* doctrine, as opposed both to the *Trinitarian* and the *Arian* schemes, which he particularly considers. "This," he says, p. 70, "seems to be the plainest, and most simple scheme of all; and it is generally allowed to have been the belief of the Nazarean christians, or the Jewish believers."

For the convenience of the reader, I have subjoined to this preface, a short state of the different opinions held by Dr. Horsley and myself on the subject of this controversy; and also an account of the time in which the principal ecclesiastical writers, and other persons whose names most frequently occur in the course of it, flourished. This will also be useful to the readers of my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*.

Having,

Having, in the course of this controversy, had occasion very carefully to revise that part of the *History* which relates to the person of Christ, I can assure the reader, that I see no reason to make any more than the following *corrections* and *alterations*; which, considering the difficulty, and extent of the undertaking, will, I think, be deemed to be very inconsiderable, and, upon the whole, by no means unfavourable to my principal object.

N. B. (*b*) signifies from the bottom of the page.

P. 7. l. 8. (*b*) after *Nazarenes*, read and it may be inferred from Origen, Epiphanius, and Eusebius, that the, &c.

P. 9. l. 7. read on account of the errors it contained, and these errors could be no other than the unitarian doctrine.

P. 19. l. 2. after *corrupted*, add and as these unitarians are called *idiotæ* (common and ignorant people) by Tertullian, it is more natural to look for ancient opinions among them than among the learned, who are more apt to innovate. With such manifest unfairness does Eusebius, or a more ancient writer, whose sentiments he adopts, treat the unitarians, &c.

Ib. l. 6. for *successor*, read *predecessor*.

P. 29. l. 9. &c. (*b*) dele all within the parenthesis:

P. 32. l. 3. (*b*) dele, is not quoted by Irenæus and, &c.

P. 55. l. 7. (b) read *the greater part.*

P. 74. l. 6. dele, *According to Epiphanius,* and to the end of the sentence.

P. 99. l. 6. (b) read *that there may be God, the word, wisdom, man.*

P. 216. l. 12. For *our Lord,* read *the Lord.*

IN VOL. II.

P. 11. l. 10. read, *In this age the table on which it was celebrated was called the mystical table, and Theophilus, to whom Jerom (if the epistle be genuine) writes, says, that the very utensils, &c.*

For this last correction, I am obliged to the writer of the Critical Review; and I shall be thankful to any of my readers for the notice of any other oversight, from which a work of this extent could not be expected to be exempt.

N. B. A copy of these corrections will be given to the purchasers of the *History*.

A CATALOGUE

A CATALOGUE of the principal Ecclesiastical
Writers, &c. after the Apostolic Age, with the
Time when they flourished, chiefly from Cave's
Historia Literaria.

I gnatius, A. D.	101	Beryllus	230
Polycarp	108	Dionysius (of Alex-	
Papias	110	andria)	247
Basilides	120	Cyprian	248
Valentinus	125	Noetus	250
Marcion	130	Novatian	251
Justin Martyr	140	Gregory of Neo-	
Irenæus	167	cesarea	252
Theophilus	168	Paul of Samosata	260
Hegesippus	170	Sabellius	260
Montanus	172	Manes	277
Tatian	172	Arnobius	303
Athenagoras	177	Lactantius	303
Artemon	187	Arius	315
Theodotus of		Eusebius Pamphilus	
Byzantium	192	the historian	315
Clemens Alexan-		Athanasius	326
drinus	192	Marcellus of Ancyra	330
Tertullian	192	Photinus	344
Symmachus	201	Cyril of Jerusalem	350
Caius	210	Hilary	354
Hippolytus	220	Eunomius	360
Origen	230	Apollinarius (sen.)	362
		Epiphanius	

xxviii *A Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers.*

Epiphanius	368	Pelagius	405
Optatus	- 368	Theodorus of	
Basil	- 370	Mopsuestia	407
Gregory (Nyssen)	370	Cyril of Alexandria	412
Gregory (Nazianzen)	370	Theodore	425
Apollinarius (jun.)	370	Nestorius	428
Ambrose	374	Eutyches	- 448
Jerom	378	Claudianus Ma-	
Austin	- 396	mertus	462
Chrysostom	398	Facundus	- 540
Sulpicius Severus	401	Gregory the Great	590

The same in alphabetical Order.

Ambrose	- 374	Claudianus Ma-	
Apollinarius, sen.	362	mertus	462
——— jun.	370	Clemens Alexan-	
Arius	- 315	drinus	192
Arnobius	- 303	Cyprian	- 248
Artemon	- 187	Cyril of Alexandria	412
Athanasius	326	——— Jerusalem	350
Athenagoras	- 177	Dionysius of	
Austin	- 396	Alexandria	247
Basil	- - 370	Epiphanius	368
Basilides	- 120	Eunomius	- 360
Beryllus	230	Eusebius Pamphilus	315
Caius	- - 210	Eutyches	- 448
Chrysostom	398	Facundus	540
		Gregory	

Gregory the Great	590	Optatus	- - -	368
— of Neoce-		Origen	-	230
sarea	252	Papias	-	110
— Nazian-		Paul of Samosata		260
zen	370	Pelagius		405
— Nyssen	370	Photinus	-	344
Hegesippus	170	Polycarp	-	108
Hilary	354	Sabellius	-	260
Hippolytus	220	Sulpicius Severus		401
Ignatius	101	Symmachus		201
Jerom	378	Tatian	-	172
Irenæus	167	Tertullian		192
Justin Martyr	140	Theodoret	-	425
Lactantius	303	Theodorus of		
Manes	277	Mopsuestia		407
Marcellus of Ancyra	330	Theodotus of		
Marcion	130	Byzantium		192
Montanus	172	Theophilus of		
Nestorius	428	Antioch		168
Noetus	250	Valentinus		125
Novatian	251			

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*The different Opinions of Dr. HORSLEY and Dr.
PRIESTLEY, briefly stated.*

THAT my readers may more easily form a clear and comprehensive idea of the *nature* and *extent* of this controversy, I shall, in this place, briefly state the principal articles on which Dr. Horsley and myself hold different opinions.

1. Dr. Horsley insists upon it, that the faith of the primitive christian church must have been trinitarian, because that doctrine appears in the writings of Barnabas and Ignatius. I say that, admitting these works to be genuine *in the main*, they bear evident marks of interpolation with respect to this very subject, and therefore the conclusion is not just.

2. Dr. Horsley says, that those who are called *Ebionites*, did not exist in the age of the apostles, and also that, though they believed the simple humanity of Christ, they probably held some mysterious exaltation of his nature after his ascension, which made him the object of prayer to them. I say the Ebionites certainly existed in the time of the apostles, and that this notion of their holding such an exaltation of his nature, as to make him the object of prayer, is highly improbable.

3. Dr.

3. Dr. Horsley says, that those who are called *Nazarenes* by the early christian writers, believed the divinity of Christ, that they did not exist till after the time of Adrian, and had their name from the place where they settled in the North of Galilee, after they were then driven from Jerusalem. I maintain that these Nazarenes no more believed the divinity of Christ than the Ebionites, and that, together with them, they were supposed, by the christian Fathers, to have existed in the time of the apostles.

4. Dr. Horsley maintains that there was a church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem, after the time of Adrian; for that the body of Jewish christians, who had before observed the law of Moses, abandoned their ceremonies after the destruction of the place, in order to obtain the privileges of the *Ælian* colony, settled there by Adrian. Origen who asserts that the Jewish christians had not abandoned the laws and customs of their ancestors, Dr. Horsley says must have known the contrary, and therefore asserted a wilful falsehood. I say that Adrian expelled all the Jews, whether christians or not, from Jerusalem, that the christian church afterwards settled at Jerusalem consisted wholly of Gentile converts, and that the testimony of Origen, agreeing with this, is highly worthy of credit.

5. Dr. Horsley maintains, that though he finds no unitarians in the apostolic age, a cen-

sure

ture was intended for them by the apostle John in the phrase *Christ came in the flesh*. I assert that, the unitarians did exist in great numbers in the time of John, but that he did not censure them at all; and that the phrase *Christ came in the flesh*, relates to the Gnostics only.

6. Dr. Horsley asserts, that the unitarians, from the time that they made their appearance, were considered as *heretics* by the orthodox christians, and not admitted to communion with them, and particularly that they were included by Justin Martyr among those heretics whom he charges with *blasphemy*. I assert that in Justin's time, and much later, the unitarians were not deemed heretics at all, that Justin did not even allude to unitarians in either of his two accounts of *heretics in general*, and that the *blasphemy* he speaks of respected the Gnostics only.

7. Though Tertullian says the *idiotæ*, who were the greater part of christians were unitarians, and shocked at the doctrine of the trinity, Dr. Horsley asserts that he only meant to include a small number of them in that class, and those so ignorant and stupid as to deserve to be called *ideots*. I maintain that by *idiotæ* he only meant *unlearned persons*, or *persons in private life*; and I also maintain that even in Origen's time, and long after, a great part of these christians were unitarians, and in communion with the catholic church; that the term *heresy* was long used as
 I
 synonymous

synonymous to *Gnosticism*, and that the original use of the term frequently occurs even after the unitarians were deemed to be heretics.

8. Dr. Horsley maintains that by the Jews who held the simple humanity of Christ, Athanasius meant the unbelieving Jews only, and that the Gentiles who were by them converted to that belief, were unbelieving Gentiles. I say the Jews were christian Jews, and their converts christian Gentiles.

9. Dr. Horsley maintains that the Jews in our Saviour's time, believed in the doctrine of the trinity, that they expected the second person in the trinity as their Messiah, and that they changed their opinion concerning him when the christians applied it to Christ. I say that the Jews were always unitarians, that they expected only a man for their Messiah, and that they never changed their opinion on that subject.

10. Dr. Horsley says that the apostles considered Christ as being God from the time that they considered him as the Messiah. I say that they considered him as a mere man, when they received him as the Messiah, and that we find no evidence in their history, or in their writings, that they ever changed that opinion concerning him.

11. Dr. Horsley denies that the orthodox fathers before the council of Nice, held that the logos had been an attribute of the deity, and then assumed a proper personality; and says that all that they meant by the *generation of the son*, was the *display of his powers* in the production of material beings. I assert, that by this *generation*, they certainly meant a *change of state* in the logos, viz. from a mere *attribute*, such as *reason* is in man, to a *proper person*, and that in their opinion this was made with a view to the creation of the world.

12. Dr. Horsley can find no difference between this doctrine of the personification of the logos, and the peculiar opinions of the Arians. I assert that they were two schemes directly opposed to each other, and so clearly defined, as never to have been confounded or mistaken.

13. Dr. Horsley asserts, that it seems to have been the opinion of all the Fathers, and is likewise agreeable to the scriptures, that the second person in the trinity had his origin from the first person contemplating his own perfections. I challenge him to produce any authority whatever, ancient or modern, for that opinion.

14. Dr. Horsley maintains that, though the three persons in the trinity have each of them all the perfections of deity, the Father is the fountain of the divinity, and has some unknown pre-eminence.

nence. I assert that this pre-eminence is inconsistent with the proper *equality*, and that if they be properly equal, they must necessarily be three gods as well as three persons.

15. Dr. Horsley says, that prayer for succour in external prosecution, seems with particular propriety to be addressed to the Son. I say that this is altogether a distinction of his own, and has no countenance in scripture precept or example, nor, indeed, in those of the primitive church.

16. Dr. Horsley maintains that the unitarians do not even pretend that the general tenor of scripture is in their favour, that they cannot produce any text that plainly contains their doctrine, but that they derive it wholly from particular passages, to which they give a figurative interpretation. Whereas I maintain that the unitarians have always appealed to the general tenor of scripture, and the plain language of it; and on the contrary, that the trinitarians cannot find *their* doctrine either in the general tenor, or in any clear texts of scripture, but that they deduce it from particular expressions, and circumstances, which, when rightly explained, do by no means authorize their conclusions.

17. Dr. Horsley says, that the difference between the unitarians and the Mahometans is so
c 2 small,

small, and such advances were made towards the Mahometans by the unitarians of the last age, that there is good ground to think, that the unitarians will soon acknowledge the divine mission of Mahomet. He also represents christianity on the principles of unitarianism, as inferior to deism, and when joined with materialism, as highly favourable to atheism. Such charges as these, I say, can proceed from nothing but ignorance and malevolence, and do not deserve a serious refutation.

These are all the articles of importance on which we hold different opinions, every thing else being of less moment, and subordinate to these.

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N. B. (b) signifies from the bottom of the page.

P. 95. l. 1. (b) for *unbegotten*, read *only begotten*.

P. 107. l. 6. for *Sheclinab*, read *Shechinab*.

P. 42. l. 3. for *then*, read *there*.

P. 40. l. 3. (b) for *third*, read *second*.

P. 36. l. 9. (b) for *do*, read *no*.

L E T T E R S

TO THE

ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBANS.

L E T T E R I.

The Introduction.

REV. SIR,

AT length you have condescended to gratify my wishes, and have favoured me with a series of letters, in answer to mine. But as they are written with a degree of insolence, which nothing in your situation or mine can justify, and indicate a temper that appears to me to be very far from being the most proper for the discussion of historical truth; I shall consider myself, in this answer, as writing not so much to you, as to the candid part of the public, to whom our correspondence is open; and I have no doubt but that I shall be able to satisfy all who are qualified to judge between us, that your ignorance of the subject which you have undertaken to discuss, is equal to your insolence; and therefore, that there is no great reason to regret that you have formed a resolution to appear no more in this controversy. "Whatever, more," you say, p. 9.

B

"you

“you may find to say upon the subject, in me you
“will have no antagonist.”

I made the proposal to discuss the question of the state of opinions concerning Christ in the early ages, in a perfectly amicable, and as I thought, the most advantageous manner, and my address to you, was uniformly respectful. It has not been my fault that this proposal was not accepted. You say, p. 166. “I held it my duty to use pretty freely that high seasoning of controversy which may interest the readers attention.” What that *high seasoning* is, is sufficiently apparent through the whole of your performance, viz. a violation of all decency, and perpetual imputations of the grossest, but of the most improbable kind. This, from respect to the public, and to myself, I shall not return; but I shall certainly think myself authorized by it to treat you with a little less ceremony in the present publication, in which I shall take occasion from your gross mistakes, and misrepresentations, to throw some farther light on the subject of this discussion.

The reader must have been particularly struck with the frequent boasting of your *victory*, as if the controversy had come to a regular termination, and the public had decided in your favour. “My victory,” you say, p. 7. “is already so complete, that I might well decline any farther contest.” In p. 160. you say, “it would have heightened the pride of my victory if I could have found a fair occasion to be the herald of my adversary’s
“praise.”

"praise." P. 10. you call me a *foiled polemic*, and p. 8. a *prostrate enemy*. What marks of *prostration* you may have perceived in me, I cannot tell. I do not know that I have yet laid myself at your feet, and I presume, this kind of language is rather premature. It will be time enough for you to say with Entellus, *Hic caestus artemque repono*, when the victory, of which you boast, shall be as clear as his; and shall be declared to be so by the *proper judges*. You ought also to have remembered the advice of Solomon, Prov. xxvii. 2. *Let another man praise thee and not thine own mouth, a stranger and not thine own lips.*

On the contrary, I cautioned my reader (preface, p. 19) not to conclude too hastily in my favour, but to wait till you had made your reply. You have now done it, and I hope they will do me the justice to hear me again in return, especially as this will probably be the last time that I shall trouble them in this way.

Though this controversy has not come to what I think its proper and desirable termination, I rejoice that it has proceeded thus far; and upon the whole I derive great satisfaction from the opposition that my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity* has met with; both because a more general attention has been excited to the subject; and also because, having, by this means, been led to attend to it more than I should otherwise have done, I have discovered a variety of ad-

4 LETTERS TO THE

ditional evidence in support of what I had advanced, and such an abundant confirmation of the evidence before produced, as gives even myself a greater degree of confidence in it than I could otherwise have had. And when my readers in general shall see, as they cannot but see, with what extreme eagerness the most insignificant oversights have been caught at, and magnified, and the readiness with which I have acknowledged such oversights, notwithstanding the gross insults with which this candour has been treated, and also that every objection has brought out new evidence in my favour, it cannot but beget a persuasion, that the most sharp-sighted adversary will not be able to detect any mistake of real consequence; and from this will be derived a degree of credit to my work that nothing else could have given it. Your object, you say, p. 8. was to *demolish the credit of my narrative*; but I am much mistaken if, instead of that, your weak, though violent opposition, has not greatly contributed to strengthen it.

You will perhaps be struck with the change in the style of my address to you, when you observe me beginning with *Rev. Sir*, instead of the *Dear Sir* of my former letters, an appellation to which our personal acquaintance gave a propriety, and which you have returned; but when I consider how ill it corresponds to the spirit of your letters, and the stress you lay on your *Archidiaconal dignity*, which appears not only in the title-page of your work, but at the head of many of your letters,
and

ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBANS. 5

and which you intimate, p. 158. that I had not sufficiently attended to, I thought the style of *Rev. Sir*, and occasionally that of *Mr. Archdeacon* both more proper, and also more pleasing to yourself, and therefore I have adopted it. And if, by any accident, I should wound your feelings, p. 159. you will find the proper balm in my running title.

While persons who have some personal acquaintance treat each other with decent respect, and are uniform in doing it, as I have been to you, the usual style of *Dear Sir* is natural, and proper; but when you charge me with numerous instances of the grossest artifice, and imposition on the Public, you in fact give me the lie; and therefore ought yourself to have dropped all terms expressive of affection and regard. I renounce all particular respect for the man who has treated me in this manner; and in the outset of this second part of our correspondence, I subscribe myself, merely because custom authorizes the form,

Rev. Sir,

Your very humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

B 3

LETTER

6 LETTERS TO THE

L E T T E R II.

*Of the doctrine of the first ages concerning the person
of Christ.*

REV. SIR,

TO shew you that I see nothing very formidable
in your strongest arguments, I shall begin
with what you call "your *positive proof*, p. 64.
" that the divinity of our Lord was the belief of
" the very first christians." This proof is
wholly derived from the epistle of Barnabas.

Of Barnabas you say, p. 66. " You allow him
" a place among the fathers of the apostolic age,
" and will you not allow that he was a believer
" in our Lord's divinity? I will not take upon
" me, Sir, to answer this question for you; but
" I will take upon me to say, that whoever de-
" nies it, must deny it to his own shame. The
" proof from this writer," you say, " p. 68. is so
" direct and full, though it lies in a narrow com-
" pass, that if this be laid in one scale, and your
" whole mass of evidence from incidental and
" ambiguous allusions in the other, the latter
" would fly up and kick the beam."

I am surprized, Sir, at the extreme confidence
with which you tread this very precarious and
uncertain

uncertain ground; when, to say nothing of the doubts entertained by many learned men concerning the genuineness of this epistle, the most that is possible to be admitted is, that it is genuine *in the main*. For whether you may have observed it or not, it is most evidently *interpolated*, and the interpolations respect the very subject of which we treat. Two passages in the Greek, which assert the pre-existence of Christ, are omitted in the ancient Latin version of it. And can it be supposed that that version was made in an age in which such an omission was likely to be made? Both the interpolations are in sect. vi. where we now read thus: λέγει γὰρ ἡ γραφή περὶ ἡμῶν, ὡς λέγει τῷ υἱῷ, ποιήσωμεν καὶ εἰκόνα καὶ κατ' οὐμοιωσὶν ἡμῶν, τὸν ἀνθρώπον. *For the scripture says concerning us, as he says to the Son, Let us make man according to our image, and our likeness.* But the ancient Latin version corresponding to this passage is simply this, *Sicut dicit scriptura, Faciamus hominem, &c. i. e. As says the scripture, Let us make man, &c.*

Again, in the same section, after quoting from Moses, *Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth*, the Greek copy has, ταῦτα πρὸς τὸν υἱόν, *These things to the Son*; but in the old Latin version the clause is wholly omitted; and certainly there is no want of it, or of the similar clause in the former passage, with respect to the general object of the writer. These, Sir, appear to me pretty evident marks of interpolation.

The passage on which you lay the chief stress is only in the Latin version, that part of the Greek copy to which it corresponds being now lost; and all the other expressions that you note are such as an Unitarian will find no difficulty in accommodating to his principles.

On these accounts, your evidence from this epistle of Barnabas will by no means bear the stress that you lay upon it. Can it be thought at all improbable, that if one person interpolated the Greek, another should make as free with the Latin version? I must therefore see other evidence than this from Barnabas, before I can admit that the doctrine of the divinity or pre-existence of Christ was the belief of the apostolic age.

You still argue with the same confidence from the epistle of Clemens Romanus. "The context," you now say, p. 29. "determines the coming of Christ, of which he speaks, to be from a pre-existent state," and this you call "something of great importance in its defence," as no doubt it would be, if it was just; but let us examine it. The whole of the passage, with the small context on which you lay so much stress, is, in your own words, as follows; "He came not, says Clemens, in the pomp of pride and arrogance, although he had it in his power, but in humility, as the Holy Spirit spake concerning him.—To determine what this humility is, Clemens immediately goes on to
"cite

“cite the prophecies which describe the Messiah’s low condition. The humility, therefore, of an ordinary condition, is that in which it is said the Messiah came. The pomp, therefore, of a high condition, is the pomp in which it is said he came not, although he had it in his power to come. The expressions, therefore, clearly imply that our Lord, ere he came, had the power to choose in what condition he would be born.”

But, Sir, had you considered the prophecies which Clemens quotes, you would have found them to be not such as describe the circumstances of his *birth*, but only those of his *public life* and *death*; the principal of them being, Is. liii. which he quotes almost at full length. How then does this *important circumstance* help your argument? It is, on the other hand, certainly favourable to mine, viz. that when Christ was in public life, he made no ostentatious display of the extraordinary powers, with which he was invested, and preferred a low condition to that of a great prince,

The more ancient reading that you quote of Jerom, I also consider as evidently favourable to my interpretation of this passage. He read *πᾶσι δυνάμενος*, *having all power*, which naturally alludes to the great power of which he became possessed after the descent of the spirit of God upon him at his baptism.

As

As to the phrase *coming*, you must be little *at home*, as you say, in the language of the scriptures, or have given little attention to it, not to have perceived, that it is a phrase used to express *the mission of any prophet*, and that it is applied to John the Baptist as well as to Christ, of which the following are examples. Matt. xi. 18, 19. *John came neither eating nor drinking, &c. The son of man came eating and drinking, &c.* i. e. not locally from heaven, but as the prophets came from God. Christ says of John, Matt. xxi. 32. *John came unto you in the way of righteousness.* John the evangelist also says of him, John i. 7. *The same came for a witness, &c.* so that all your descanting upon this passage of Clemens is impertinent.

Admitting that some one circumstance in the prophecies he quotes, rigorously interpreted, should allude to the birth of Christ (though I see no reason to think so) you are not authorized to conclude that Clemens attended to that in particular, but to the general scope of the whole, which is evidently descriptive of his public life only.

If with your boasted knowledge of *Greek*, you had attended ever so little to the *theory of language* in general, and the *natural use of words*, you would have seen, that the term *God* would not, from the beginning, have been used by way of contradiction to *Christ*, if the former could have been predicated of the latter. We say *the prince and the king*, because the prince is not a king. If he had,
we

ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBANS. 11

we should have had recourse to some other distinction, as that of *greater* and *less*, *senior* and *junior*, *father* and *son*, &c. When therefore the apostle Paul said, that the church at Corinth was *Christ's*, and that *Christ was God's* (and that manner of distinguishing them is perpetual in the New Testament) it is evident, that he could have no idea of Christ being *God*, in any proper sense of the word.

In like manner, Clemens, in this passage, calling *Christ* the *scepter of the majesty of God*, sufficiently proves that, in his idea, the *scepter* was one thing, and the *God* whose scepter it was, another. This, I say, must have been the case when this language was first adopted, though when principles are once formed, we see, by a variety of experience, that any language may be accommodated to them. But an attention to this circumstance will, I doubt not, contribute, with persons of real discernment, to bring us back to the original use of the words, and to the ideas originally annexed to them. I am persuaded that even now, the constant use of these terms *Christ* and *God*, as opposed to each other, has a great effect in preventing those of the common people who read the New Testament more than books of controversy, from being habitually and practically Trinitarians. There will, by this means, be a much greater difference between *God* and *Christ* in their *minds*, than they find in their *creeds*.

With

LETTERS TO THE

With respect to Ignatius, I would observe, that as you knew the genuineness of his epistles had been controverted, and by men of learning and ability, you certainly ought not from the first to have concealed that circumstance. You say, however, p. 34. "I shall appeal to them with the less scruple, so far as the same sincerity which I ascribe to them, and which is quite sufficient for my purpose, is allowed by the learned and the candid Dr. Lardner.—After suggesting in no very confident language, that even the smaller epistles may have been tampered with by the Arians, or the Orthodox, or both, he adds, *I do not affirm that there are in them any considerable alterations or corruptions.* If no considerable corruptions or alterations, certainly none respecting a point of such importance as the original nature of Christ."

This is curious indeed. What then could Dr. Lardner mean by these epistles having been tampered with by the Arians, the Orthodox, or both? If they interpolated them at all, it would certainly be to introduce into them passages favourable to their opinions concerning the divinity or pre-existence of Christ. How would it be worth their while, as Arians or Orthodox, to interpolate them for any other purpose? If a farmer, hearing of some depredation on his property committed by foxes, should say, My corn may have been plundered, but as the mischief has been done by foxes, my geese and my poultry are safe; what would be

said of his reasoning? Yet of the same nature is yours in this case.

These foxes have not refrained from their prey in more sacred inclosures than those of Ignatius. —Sir Isaac Newton, among others, has clearly proved that the orthodox, as they are commonly called, have, in this way, *tampered* with the New Testament itself; having made interpolations favourable to the doctrine of the trinity, especially the famous passage concerning the *three that bear record in heaven*, in the first epistle of John. This I should imagine, you yourself will acknowledge; and can you think they would spare the epistles of Ignatius, which were much more in their power?

Jortin says, “ Though the shorter epistles are on many accounts preferable to the larger, yet I will not affirm that they have undergone no alteration at all.” Remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. I. p. 361.

For my own part, I scruple not to say, that there never were more evident marks of interpolation in any writings than are to be found in these *genuine epistles*, as they are called, of Ignatius; though I am willing to allow, on reconsidering them, that, exclusive of manifest interpolation, there may be a ground-work of antiquity in them. The famous passage in Josephus concerning Christ is not a more evident interpolation than many in these epistles of Ignatius, which you quote with so much confidence.

You

You yourself may believe that every word now found in these epistles was actually written by Ignatius; but if they have been *tampered with*, or have undergone *alterations*, how can you quote them with so much confidence, as if the argument must necessarily have the same weight with all persons? Notwithstanding this, you say, p. 34. "I will therefore, still appeal to these epistles as sufficiently sincere to be decisive in the point in dispute. Nor shall I think myself obliged to go into the proof of their authenticity, till you have given a satisfactory reply to every part of Bishop Pearson's elaborate defence, a work which I suspect you have not yet *looked through*." And I Sir, shall save myself that trouble, till you shall have replied to every part of *Larroque's answer to this work of Pearson*; a work, which I suspect you have not *looked into*. I will, however, favour you with a sight of it, if you will gratify me with the perusal of the works of Zuicker, which, by your account, you have carefully read, though, I have not yet been able to procure them.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R III.

Of the Nazarenes, and Ebionites.

REV. SIR,

YOU still insist, p. 38. upon the *high orthodoxy* of those whom the christian Fathers call Nazarenes. "Epiphanius," you say, p. 38. "confesses that the Nazarenes held the catholic doctrine concerning the nature of our Lord," whereas, I have maintained, that, though, according to him, and some other ancient writers, there was *some* difference between them and the Ebionites, they still agreed in asserting the proper humanity of Christ. The *γυνή* which distinguished the Ebionites, you say, p. 41. was something that they had borrowed not from the Ναζωραῖοι, the christian Nazarenes, but the *Nasareans*, a sect of Jews only. "I still abide by my assertion," you say, p. 176. "that the name of *Nazarenes* was never heard of in the church; that is, among christians themselves, before the final destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian; when it became the specific name of the Judaizers, who at that time separated from the church at Jerusalem, and settled in the North of Galilee: the name was taken from the country in which they settled."

I am really astonished that you should have the assurance to assert all this, so directly contrary to every thing that appears on the face of ecclesiastical history,
and

and which must have been borrowed from your imagination only, as I shall easily prove. I cannot raise Epiphanius himself from the dead, to solve the question concerning *his opinion*, nor do I wish to disturb the good Father's repose; but, though dead, he speaks sufficiently plain for my purpose in the following passage.

“ Wherefore the blessed John coming, and
 “ finding men employed about the humanity of
 “ Christ, and the Ebionites being in an error
 “ about the earthly genealogy of Christ, deduced
 “ from Abraham, carried by Luke as high as
 “ Adam, and finding the Cerinthians and Me-
 “ rinthians maintaining that he was a mere man,
 “ born by natural generation of both the sexes,
 “ and also the Nazarenes, and many other here-
 “ sies; as coming last (for he was the fourth to
 “ write a gospel) began as it were to call back
 “ the wanderers, and those who were employed
 “ about the humanity of Christ; and seeing some
 “ of them going into rough paths, leaving the
 “ strait and true path, cries, Whither are you
 “ going, whither are you walking, who tread a
 “ rough and dangerous path, leading to a pre-
 “ cipice? It is not so. The God, the logos,
 “ which was begotten by the Father from all
 “ eternity, is not from Mary only. He is not
 “ from the time of Joseph, he is not from the
 “ time of Salathiel and Zerobabel, and David,
 “ and Abraham, and Jacob, and Noah, and
 “ Adam; but in the beginning was the logos,
 “ and

"and the logos was with God, and the logos
"was God. The *was*, and the *was*, and the *was*,
"do not admit of his having ever not been *."

Perhaps you will say that this testimony of Epiphanius is *forged* by me, as you charge me with respect to the same writer, p. 13. I therefore beg that you would examine the passage yourself. You will find my reference to it sufficiently exact.

After reading this passage, can any person entertain a doubt but that, in the opinion of Epiphanius at least (and, weak as he was in some things, he stands uncontradicted *in this* by any authority whatever, and his account is confirmed

* Διὸ καὶ Ἰωάννης ἐλθὼν ὁ μακάριος, καὶ εὐρῶν τὸν ἀνθρώπον·
 ποχολημένους περὶ τὴν καλὴν Χριστὸν παρουσίαν, καὶ τὴν ἐβραϊστῶν
 πλανηθέντων διὰ τὴν εὐσάρχον Χριστὸν γενεαλογίαν, ἀπὸ
 Ἀβραὰμ καταγομένην, καὶ Λύκα ἀναγομένην ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἀδὰμ εὐρῶν
 δὲ Κηρινθίαιους, καὶ Μερνιδιανούς, ἐκ παραπίπτουσιν αὐτὸν λεγούσας
 εἶναι φίλον ἀνθρώπον, καὶ τοὺς Ναζωραίους, καὶ πολλὰς πολλὰς
 αἰρέσεις, ὡς καλοῦσιν ἐλθόν, τίμαρθε γὰρ εἰς εὐαγγελίζεσθαι,
 ἀχθεῖσιν ἀνακαλεῖσθαι, ὡς εἶπεν, τοὺς πλανηθέντας, καὶ ποχολη-
 μένους περὶ τὴν καλὴν Χριστὸν παρουσίαν, καὶ λέγουσιν αὐτοῖς (ὡς
 καλοῦσιν βαίων, καὶ ὅρων τινὰς εἰς τραχεῖας ὁδοὺς κεκλιμένους καὶ
 ἀφέντας τὴν εὐθείαν καὶ ἀληθινὴν, ὡς εἶπεν) τοὺς ῥερεθεῖς, ποί-
 ἐαδίξτε, ἐκ τῆς τραχείας ὁδοῦ καὶ ἀκατάστατον καὶ εἰς χάσμα
 ῥευσάν ἐαδίξοντες· ἀνακαμψαίτε. Οὐκ εἰν κίως, καὶ εἰν ἀπὸ
 Μαρίας μόνον ὁ Θεὸς λογιέσθαι, οὐκ πατρὸς ἀνιδέν γεννημένον,
 καὶ εἰν ἀπὸ τῶν χρόνων Ἰωσήφ τοῦ ταυτὸς ὁρμάς, καὶ εἰν ἀπὸ
 τῶν χρόνων Σαλαδίν, καὶ Ζορβαδουλ, καὶ Δαβίδ, καὶ Ἀβραὰμ,
 καὶ Ἰακώβ, καὶ Νωε, καὶ Ἀδὰμ, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λογί-
 ῃν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. τοῦ δὲ ἦν, καὶ ἡ, καὶ ἡ,
 καὶ ὑποδέχεται τε μὴ εἶναι ποίε. Παρ. 69. ἱεῖ. 23. Ορεγα,
 vol. I. p. 747.

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by the most respectable ones in all antiquity) the Nazarenes were not only a sect of Jewish christians in the time of the apostles, but, together with the Ebionites, a very formidable sect, and that this sect held the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ? Did he not, as appears by this passage, consider the Nazarenes as standing in need of being taught the pre-existence and divinity of Christ, as well as the Ebionites, and the other sects that he here mentions or alludes to?

In another place this writer compares the Nazarenes to persons who, seeing a fire at a distance, and not understanding the cause, or the use of it, run towards it and burn themselves; so "these Jews, he says, on hearing the name of Jesus only, and the miracles performed by the apostles, believe on him; and knowing that he was born at Nazareth, and brought up in the house of Joseph, and that on that account he was called a Nazarene (the apostles styling him *a man of Nazareth, approved by miracles and mighty deeds*) imposed that name upon themselves*." How, Sir, does this agree with this

* Ακούσαντες γὰρ μόνον ὄνομα τοῦ Ἰησοῦ, καὶ διασάμναι ταῖς θεοσημείαις τὰ διὰ χειρῶν τῶν ἀποστόλων γινόμενα, καὶ αὐτοὶ ἐν αὐτῷ πιστεύουσι. γινώσκοντες δὲ αὐτὸν εἶναι Ναζαρεθὶ καὶ γὰρ ἐγκυμονηθεῖν, καὶ ἐν οἴκῳ Ἰωσήφ ἀναβραβεῖν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ Ἰησοῦν Ναζωραῖον καλεῖσθαι, ὡς καὶ οἱ ἀπόστολοι φασὶν Ἰησοῦν τὸν Ναζωραῖον ἄνδρα, ἀποδείδειγματον ἐν τοῖς σημείοις καὶ τέρασιν καὶ ταῖς ἐξέχουσιν. τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα ἐπέθηκεσαν αὐτῷ, τὸ καλεῖσθαι Ναζωραῖος. *Heb. 29. sect. 5. Opera, vol. I. p. 120.*

writer's supposing that the Nazarenes, of whom he was treating, were well instructed in the doctrine of the divinity of Christ? Also how does this agree with the late origin that you give to these Nazarenes?

You, Mr. Archdeacon, are pleased to deny the existence even of the Ebionites in the time of the apostles, contrary, I will venture to say, to the unanimous testimony of all antiquity.—Jerom, giving an account of the reasons that moved John to write his gospel, mentions the Ebionites not only as a sect, but a flourishing sect in the time of that apostle. See the following passage from his catalogue of ecclesiastical writers: “John, the apostle, whom Jesus loved, “the son of Zebedee, and brother of James, “who was beheaded by Herod after the death “of Christ, wrote his gospel the last of all (at “the intreaty of the bishops of Asia) against “Cerinthus, and other heretics, and especially “the doctrine of the Ebionites, then gaining “ground, who said that Christ had no being “before he was born of Mary, whence he was “compelled to declare his divine origin.”—This is only one out of many authorities that I

* Joannes Apostolus quem Jesus amavit plurimum, filius Zebedæi, frater Jacobi Apostoli, quem Herodes post passionem domini decollavit, novissimus omnium, scripsit evangelium, rogatus ab Asiæ episcopis, adversus Cerinthus, aliosque hæreticos et maxime tunc Ebionitarum dogma confurgens, qui asserunt Christum ante Mariam non fuisse, unde et compulsus est divinam ejus naturam edicere. Opera, vol. I. p. 273.

could produce for this purpose, and it is not possible to produce any to the contrary.

“As a certain proof,” you say, p. 27, “that the Ebionites and Nazarenes were two distinct sects, Mosheim observes that each had its own gospel.” But in answer to this opinion of Mosheim’s, I shall give you another, which I think of equal authority, viz. that of Mr. Jeremiah Jones, with whom I find I have had the happiness to bring you acquainted; and I can introduce him with the greater confidence of his being well received, as he was as orthodox as yourself. As he is a writer intirely new to you, I shall give his whole paragraph on the subject.

“It is plain, there was a very great agreement between these two ancient sects; and though they went under different names, yet they seem only to have differed in this, that the Ebionites had made some addition to the old Nazarene system. For Origen expressly tells us, *Kai ἐκ τῶν αὐτῶν χρηματίζουσιν οἱ ἀπὸ Ἰουδαίων τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὡς Χριστὸν παραδείξαντες. They were called Ebionites who from among the Jews own Jesus to be the Christ.* And though Epiphanius seems to make their gospels different, calling one *εὐαγγέλιον* most intire, yet this need not move us. For if the learned Casaubon’s conjecture should not be right, that we should read the same, viz. *εὐαγγέλιον* in both places (which yet is very probable for any thing Father Simon has proved

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"to the contrary) yet will the difficulty be all
 "removed at once by this single consideration,
 "that Epiphanius never saw any gospel of the
 "Nazarenes; for though he calls it *παλιρρεστος*,
 "yet he himself says, *οτι οὐκ εἶδε τις τῆς γενεαλογίας*
 "*παραβλην*, that he did not know whether they
 "had taken away the genealogy, as the Ebionites
 "had done; i. e. having never seen the Naza-
 "rene gospel, for ought he knew it might be the
 "very same with that of the Ebionites, as in-
 "deed it most certainly was." *On the Canon*,
 vol. I. p. 386.

As I have perceived that the opinion of the
 moderns has sometimes great weight with you, I
 shall transcribe part of a note of the learned
 translator of Mosheim on this subject. "This
 "gospel," he says, vol. I. p. 173. "which was
 "called indiscriminately the gospel of the Na-
 "zarenes, or Hebrews, is certainly the same with
 "the gospel of the Ebionites, the gospel of the
 "twelve apostles," &c. and, after referring to
 other authors, he says, "the reader will, how-
 "ever, find a still more accurate and satisfactory
 "account of this gospel, in the first volume of
 "the learned and judicious Mr. Jones's incom-
 "parable method of settling the canonical au-
 "thority of the New Testament."

But in my opinion Jerom has sufficiently de-
 cided this question against you. Could he have
 had any other idea than that these two sects (if

they were properly two) used the same gospel; when he said, "in the gospel used by the Nazarenes and Ebionites, which is commonly called the authentic gospel of Matthew, which I lately translated from Hebrew into Greek," &c.

You farther say, p. 71. "the Ebionites acknowledged no part of the Old Testament but the Pentateuch, nor the whole of that; and therefore that Hegesippus citing the Proverbs of Solomon, by a title which implies his acknowledgment of that book, is a proof that he was not an Ebionite." I know of no sufficient evidence that the Ebionites did not acknowledge the authority of all that we call the canonical books of the Old Testament. Symmachus, whose translation of the scriptures into Greek is so often quoted, and with the greatest approbation by the fathers, was an Ebionite, and Jerom says the same of Theodotion. They both translated the other books of the Old Testament, as well as the Pentateuch, and as far as appears, without making any distinction between that and the other books; and can this be thought probable, if they had not considered them as intitled to equal credit? Besides, our Saviour's acknowledgment of the authority of the whole of the Old Testament is so express, that I cannot readily

* In Evangelio quo utantur Nazareni et Ebionitæ, quod nuper in Græcum de Hebræo sermone translatus, et quod vocatur plerisque Matthæi authenticum, &c. in Matt. xii. 13. Opera, vol. vi. p. 21.

believe that any christians, Jews especially, acknowledging his authority, would reject what he admitted.

What you say can be only on the authority of Epiphanius, and that, you ought to have known is in effect contradicted by Irenæus, who says, that the Ebionites expounded the prophecies "too curiously. *Quæ autem sunt prophetica curiosius exponere nituntur*, lib. I. cap. 26.—Grabe says, that Ebion wrote an exposition of the prophets, as he collected from some fragments of the work, of which he gives some account in his note on the place. By *Ebion* we may understand some *Ebionite*; for I much doubt the existence of such a person as Ebion, the Ebionites being mentioned long before the name Ebion occurs in ecclesiastical writers.

It is an argument in favour of the identity of the Nazarenes and Ebionites, that the former are not mentioned *by name* by any writer who likewise speaks of the Ebionites before Epiphanius, though the people so called afterwards were certainly known before his time. The term *Ebionites* occurs in Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius; but none of them make any mention of *Nazarenes*; and yet it cannot be denied, that they must have been even more considerable in the time of these writers than they were afterwards; for, together with the Ebionites (if there was any difference between them) they dwindled

away, till, in the time of Austin, they were *admodum pauci*, very few.

Origen must have meant to include those who were called Nazarenes under the appellation of Ebionites, because he speaks of the Ebionites as being the whole body of Jewish christians; and the Nazarenes were christian Jews as well as they. Jerom seems to use the two terms promiscuously; and in the passage of his letter to Austin, so often quoted in this controversy, I cannot help thinking he makes them to be the same.

The conduct of these writers is easily accounted for, on the supposition of the Jewish christians having been first known to the Gentiles by the name of Ebionites only, before the appellation of Nazarenes (by which they had been distinguished by their unbelieving brethren) came to be generally known abroad. It must be more particularly difficult, on your principles, to account for the conduct of Eusebius, whose business, as an historian, it certainly was to have noticed the Nazarenes, if they had been different from the Ebionites, whom he has mentioned; and even you allow them to have had their rise in the time of Adrian, whose expedition against the Jews he particularly mentions.

On this subject of the Ebionites, I must take some notice of what you say in defence of Eusebius, who says, that Theodotus was the first who taught the doctrine of the humanity of Christ. You still main-
tain,

tain, without the least shadow of authority for it, that he carried the doctrine farther than the Ebionites had ever done; whereas, you cannot possibly produce any evidence whatever of Theodotus having been considered by the ancients in a worse light than the Ebionites.

"It is very certain," you say, p. 131, "that Theodotus maintained the mere humanity of Christ in the grossest sense; in that gross and shocking sense in which it is at this day taught by yourself and Mr. Lindsey. It is not certain that the Ebionites before Theodotus had gone farther than to deny our Lord's original divinity. They probably, like Socinus, admitted some unintelligible exaltation of his nature after his resurrection, which rendered him the object of worship." You also say, p. 87. "I deny that the unitarian doctrine existed in that time" (the age of the apostles) "in the most obnoxious form. Produce your indisputable evidence. Observe, that by the most obnoxious form, I understand that form which excludes the worship of Christ."

By the *most obnoxious form*, I meant the belief that Jesus was the son of Joseph as well as of Mary. That such persons existed in the age of the apostles, no person, I believe, except yourself, ever denied; and there is no reason whatever to believe that these Ebionites, or any Ebionites, ever considered Christ as a proper object of worship. Your idea of their entertaining the notion of an *unintelligible exaltation*

tion of his mere human nature after his resurrection, is the most improbable of all suppositions. According to all the accounts we have of the Ebionites, they were not apt to admit things unintelligible.

The case of Socinus is very different from that of the Ebionites. He had been educated in the habit of praying to Christ, and therefore might not be able to reject the practice; but the Ebionites began with considering Jesus as a *mere man*, and therefore, would no more think of paying worship to him, than they had done to Moses, without very express instructions and directions, which it is not in your power to produce, with respect either to them, or to christians in general.

Your notion that the Nazarenes were the orthodox Jews who separated from the church of Jerusalem in the time of Adrian, and settled in the north of Galilee, and that they had their name from the place where they then settled, viz. Nazareth, will, I doubt not, be quite new to every reader of ecclesiastical history, and (excepting the first of these particulars, which I suppose you learned of Mosheim, who neither quotes, nor, I will venture to say, could quote any authority for it) an invention of your own. The Nazarenes, in the time of the apostles, are well known to have had their name from Nazareth where Jesus had lived, and from which he had been usually called *Jesus of Nazareth*; but as to the Nazarenes of the christian Fathers, there is no evidence whatever of their having ever settled at Nazareth,

Nazareth, or in any part of Galilee. Jerom places the Nazarenes with whom he was acquainted (and he was well acquainted with the Nazarenes) in Beræa, in Syria. *Catalogus Virorum Illustrum*, in *Matt. Opera*, vol. I. p. 267.

You say that the Nazarenes were unknown as a sect before the destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian, but Epiphanius, in perfect agreement with all the ancients, places their rise after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. After mentioning the places where they resided, viz. Beræa, Coele-Syria, Pella, and Cocabe (observe he says nothing of any of them being in *Nazareth*, from which you suppose they had their name) he says, "There was their origin after the destruction of Jerusalem, when all the disciples lived at Pella; Christ having warned them to leave Jerusalem, and retire at the approach of the siege; and on this account they lived, as I said in Peræa. Thence the sect of the Nazarenes had its origin*."

As to the passage in Jerom from which I, after Suicer, inferred that the Ebionites and the Nazarenes were the same people, or only differed in

* Εκείθεν μὲν ἡ ἀρχὴ γέγονε μετὰ τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν Ἱεροσολύμων μίσθασιν, πάντων τῶν μαθητῶν τῶν ἐν Πέλλῃ ἀκηκόων, Χρῆς οὕτως καταλείπει τὰ Ἱεροσολύμα, καὶ ἀναχωρεῖ ἐπεὶ δὴ μέλλε παθεῖν πολιορκίαν. καὶ ἐκ τῆς τοιαύτης ὑποθέσεως τὴν Περαιαν ἀκησάντες, ἐκείσε ως εἶπον διέτριβον. ἐντεῦθεν ἡ κατὰ τὰς Ναζωραίων αἰρέσις ἔχει τὴν ἀρχὴν. *Har. 29. Opera*, vol. I. p. 123.

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some things of little moment (but which you and Mr. Badcock think is a *demonstration* that they were fundamentally different) I see no reason to be dissatisfied with my interpretation of it. You think it is a proof of my ignorance of Latin; whereas, if I thought myself at liberty to do it, I could produce in my favour as high a classical authority as any that this country can furnish.

How could Jerom call these highly orthodox Jews, as you suppose them to be, *not christians*, merely because they used the ceremonies of the law of Moses? He might have pitied them for their weakness, but he would hardly have condemned them as *no christians*.

Your own representation of them is not very unfavourable. You say, p. 49. "The christian Nazarenes had nothing in their conduct that might render them deserving of this epithet" (*ανομος, lawless.*) "Their error was that they feared to use their liberty, not that they abused it." You therefore must think his censure very harsh and ill-applied.

I think it probable that the Nazarenes or Ebionites were considered as in a state of excommunication, not merely because they themselves observed the law of Moses, but because many of them would impose the same on the Gentiles, so that, in fact, they excommunicated themselves; and thus the passage in Jerom will be

be explained by one in Justin (who says, that he could communicate with those Jews who kept to the law of Moses, but not with those who would impose it on all christians) which I shall have occasion to quote hereafter.

As to Mr. Badcock's inference from the passage in Austin's letter in answer to Jerom, I see no force in it at all. He only enumerates all the names that Jerom had mentioned, and whether these differences were real or nominal, great or little, it signified nothing to him. He himself, in his catalogue of heresies, makes a difference between the Ebionites and Nazarenes, but by no means that which you and Mr. Badcock make; and as it was a common opinion, especially in the West, that there was some difference between them (though the writers who speak of it could never be certain in what it consisted) it was very natural in Austin to mention them separately, whether Jerom had made them the same or not.

That Austin, in his answer to Jerom, did not consider the Nazarenes in any very favourable light, is evident from his speaking of them as *heretics*. "Quid putaverint hæretici, qui dum volunt et Judæi esse et christiani, nec Judæi esse nec Christiani esse potuerunt," &c. Opera vol. II. p. 75. i. e. "as to the opinion of those heretics, who while they would be both Jews and christians, can neither be Jews nor christians," &c. It is in these very words that Jerom

Jerom had characterized those whom he had called *Nazarenes*. What more could Austin have said of the Ebionites? And can it be supposed that he would have spoke of the Nazarenes in this manner, if he had thought them *highly orthodox* with respect to the doctrine of the trinity? especially considering that it was an age in which the greatest account was made of that doctrine; so that soundness in that article might be supposed to have atoned for defects in other things.

You say you are not singular, as I had supposed in asserting the strict orthodoxy of the Nazarenes in opposition to the Ebionites; but you are more nearly so than you imagine.—

“Hugo Grotius,” you say, p. 38. “Vossius, “Spencer, and Huetius, agree that the Nazarenes and Ebionites, though sometimes confounded, were distinct sects, and they maintain the opinion which I now maintain of the high orthodoxy of the proper Nazarenes in the article of our Lord’s divinity.”

Having examined the most respectable of these authorities, viz, Grotius, I find him intirely failing you, and saying no such thing as you ascribe to him. What he says is as follows: “Certe Nazaraei illi Beræenses genuina erant propago eorum qui primi ex Palestina Christi fidem erant amplexi. Nam id illis nomen primitus fuisse inditum ex domini nostri nomine qui vulgo Nazarenus vocabatur, apparet

"ex Act. xxiv. 5. Opera, vol. II. p. 4. i. e.
 "Those Beræan Nazarenes were the genuine
 "descendants of those who first in Palestine em-
 "braced the christian faith; for that this name
 "was originally given them from the name of
 "our Saviour, who was commonly called *the*
 "*Nazarene*, appears from Acts xxiv. 5."

This, Sir, is nothing more than I have repeated-
 ly said myself, viz. that the Nazarenes men-
 tioned by the primitive fathers were the genuine
 descendants of the Nazarenes in the time of Paul.
 Grotius says nothing definite about their opi-
 nions; but if his meaning must be interpreted by
 his own opinion on the subject, it would, I pre-
 sume, be in my favour; for it is allowed, I be-
 lieve, on all hands, that his Commentary on the
 New Testament is very much Socinian, certainly
 not Athanasian. But admitting that you may
 have more modern authorities for the orthodoxy
 of the Nazarenes than I had imagined (though I
 believe that a great majority are with me on this
 subject) the only authorities that are of any
 weight are the ancients, and we are now upon
 ground that appears to me not to have been suf-
 ficiently examined by any of the moderns.

Rather than tax me with ignorance of the
 sentiments of modern critics on this subject
 (which you are sometimes ready enough to do)
 you suppose that I was acquainted with them,
 and had recourse to *artifice*. "Your attempt,"
 you

you say, p. 38. "to set it forth in that light I can-
 "not but consider as a stratagem, which you were
 "willing to employ for the preservation of your
 "battered citadel; the argument from the Naza-
 "renes. In this stratagem, if I mistake not, you
 "are completely foiled. In your sallies against
 "the batteries which I have raised, I trust you
 "will be little more successful. But as too
 "much of stratagem is apt to mix itself with all
 "your operations, it will be necessary that I watch
 "very narrowly the manner of your approaches."

This argument, however, is not so much *battered*
 but that it will well hold out against all your
 efforts to overturn it. The Nazarenes, as well
 as the Ebionites, the genuine descendants of the
 old Jewish christians, and who cannot be proved
 to have departed from the faith of their ancestors,
 were all believers in the simple humanity of
 Christ; and certainly the presumption is that
 they learned this doctrine from the apostles. For
 who else were their teachers?

At the close of this subject, having, as you
 think, a manifest advantage over me, in answer
 to my saying that if the Jewish christians were
 universally Ebionites in the time of Origen, the
 probability is that they were very generally so in
 the time of the apostles; you say, p. 62. "Whence
 "should this probability arise? From this general
 "maxim, it seems, that whole bodies of men do
 "not soon change their opinions. You are,
 "indeed,

"indeed, Sir, the very last person who might
 "have been expected to form conclusions upon
 "an historical question from mere theory, in
 "defiance of the experience of mankind, in de-
 "fiance of the experience of our own country,
 "and our own times. How long is it since the
 "whole body of Dissenters in this kingdom (the
 "single sect of the Quakers excepted) took their
 "standard of orthodoxy from the opinions of
 "Calvin? Where shall we now find a Dissenter,
 "except perhaps among the dregs of Methodism,
 "who would not think it an affront to be taken
 "for a Calvinist?"

Indeed, Sir, you are peculiarly unfortunate with
 respect to this example, and ought to have been
 better informed before you had delivered your
 opinion of a matter of fact, in the present state
 of things, and at home, with so much confi-
 dence. The fact you appeal to is notoriously
 the very reverse of what you represent it to be, and
 is one among many strong proofs of the truth of
 my general maxim.

It is so far from being true that there are few
 Dissenters who would not think it an affront to be
 taken for Calvinists, that the great body of them
 would be exceedingly offended if they were called by
 any other name. This is notorious. Your learned
 good and able ally Mr. Badcock, of whom you boast
 so much, p. 77, 78. has served two congregations of
 Dissenters, both professedly calvinistical, and in the
 D highest

highest degree. He himself ranks with that class; having now, as I am informed, no communion or connexion with those who are usually called *rational Dissenters*. I appeal to himself, and his present congregation at South-Molton, as well as his former at Barnstable, for the truth of the fact.

We Dissenters are much better situated than you are for judging of the truth of my general maxim, viz. that large bodies of men do not soon change their opinions. Notwithstanding the Dissenters have no legal bonds, but are perfectly free to adopt whatever opinions they please; yet, as they were universally Calvinists at the time of the reformation, they are very generally so still. The ministers, as might be expected, are the most enlightened, and have introduced some reformation among the common people; but a majority of the ministers are, I believe; still Calvinists.

I should have thought that no person at all acquainted with history could have entertained a doubt with respect to the general maxim that you refer to, viz. that great bodies of men do not soon change their opinions. Did it not appear when our Saviour and the apostles preached the gospel with all the advantage of miracles; and did it not appear in the christianizing of the Gentile world? I need not inform you how long the ignorant country people in particular continued *pagans*, a word borrowed from their being chiefly
the

the inhabitants of villages. Does not the history both of the corruption and of the reformation of christianity prove the same thing? How many yet believe the doctrine of transubstantiation? and what I think as much a case in point, how many yet believe the doctrine of the trinity? Had it not been for the force of this maxim, we should not have found an archdeacon of St. Albans employing the moderate share of learning that he is possessed of in the defence of a tenet so palpably absurd.

You seem, Sir, to speak with contempt of the doctrines of Calvin. I must, however, remind you, that the doctrinal articles of your church are Calvinistic. If you, therefore, be a true member of the church of England, believing *ex animo*, and in their plain obvious sense, all the thirty-nine articles, you yourself believe the doctrines of original sin, predestination, and every other tenet that is generally known by the name of *Calvinistic*. I do not tax you, as you repeatedly do me, with *insincerity*. I presume you really *do* believe the doctrines that are termed Calvinistic, and therefore I think you ought to have treated them with more respect. You ought also to have spoken with more respect of the Methodists. They, as well as you, are professed members of the church of England, and not Dissenters.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R IV.

Of the supposed orthodox Jewish church at Jerusalem, and of the veracity of Origen.

REV. SIR.

YOU speak of a church of trinitarian Jews, who had abandoned the law of Moses, and resided at Jerusalem, subsequent to the time of Adrian. Origen, who asserts that all the Jewish christians of his time conformed to the law of Moses, you say, must have known of this church, and therefore you do not hesitate, after Mosheim, to tax him with asserting a wilful falsehood. Error was often ascribed to this great man by the later fathers, but never before, I believe, was his *veracity* called in question. And least of all can it be supposed that he would have dared to assert a notorious untruth in a public controversy. He must have been a fool, as well as the knave you make him, to have ventured upon it. Your treatment of myself, however, gives me the less pain, when I see you not scrupling to fix a similar odium on the character of the respectable Origen. But what, Sir, would you not have said of me, if I had been reduced to this dilemma, in order to maintain my opinion? What an outcry did not you and Mr. Badcock make when I disputed the evidence

evidence of Eusebius, though I could confute him from himself*; and with respect to *integrity*, the character of Eusebius never stood so high as that of Origen. But you, or rather your author Mosheim, shall be heard.

“I shall take,” you say, p. 59. “what you may think a bold step, I shall tax the veracity of your witness,—of this Origen. I shall tell you that, whatever may be the general credit of his character, yet in this business the particulars of his deposition are to be little regarded, when he sets out with the allegation of a notorious falsehood. He alleges of the Hebrew christians in general, that they had not renounced the Mosaic law. The assertion served him for an answer to the invective which Celsus had put in the mouth of a Jew against the converted Jews, as deserters of the laws and customs of their ancestors. The answer was not the worse for wanting truth, if his heathen antagonist was not sufficiently informed in the true distinctions of christian sects to detect the falsehood. But in all the time which he spent in Palestine, had Origen never conversed

* Pearson makes no difficulty of contradicting Eusebius in this case, and without making any apology for him at all. His opponent Mr. Daillé having said *if that account be true*, he replies, “He knew very well, that, strictly speaking, it was not true; for he knew many others long before Theodotus, and not a few even before Ignatius, who taught the same heresy, a catalogue of whom may be seen in Epiphanius,” and whom he proceeds to mention. *Vindiciæ*, lib. II. cap. ii. p. 24.

“ with Hebrew christians of another sort? Had he
“ met with no christians of Hebrew families of the
“ church of Jerusalem, when that church was under
“ the government of bishops of the uncircumcision?
“ The fact is, that after the demolition of Jerusalem
“ by Adrian, the majority of the Hebrew christians,
“ who must have passed for Jews with the Roman
“ magistrates, had they continued to adhere to the
“ Mosaic law, which to this time, they had observed
“ more from habit, than from any principle of con-
“ science, made no scruple to renounce it, that they
“ might be qualified to partake in the valuable pri-
“ vileges of the Ælian colony, from which Jews
“ were excluded. Having thus divested them-
“ selves of the form of Judaism, which to that
“ time they had born, they removed from Pella, and
“ other towns to which they had retired, and settled
“ in great numbers at Ælia. The few who re-
“ tained a superstitious veneration for their laws,
“ remained in the North of Galilee, where they
“ were joined, perhaps, by new fugitives of the
“ same weak character from Palestine. And this
“ was the beginning of the sect of the Nazarenes.
“ But from this time, whatever Origen may pretend,
“ to serve a purpose, the majority of the Hebrew
“ christians forsook their law, and lived in commu-
“ nion with the gentile bishops of the new mo-
“ delled church at Jerusalem; for the name was
“ retained, though Jerusalem was no more; and
“ the seat of the bishop was at Ælia. All this I
“ affirm with the less hesitation, being supported by
“ the authority of Mosheim, from whom, indeed,
“ I first

"I first learned to rate the testimony of Origen, in
 "this particular question, at its true value."

Struck with this extraordinary narration, of a transaction of ancient times, for which you refer to no authority besides that of Mosheim, I looked into him; but even there I do not find all the particulars that you mention. He says nothing of the Jewish christians having observed their law more from habit than any principle of conscience; nothing of their making no scruple to renounce their law, in order to partake in the privileges of the *Ælian* colony; nothing of any Jewish christians removing from Pella and settling in *Ælia*; nothing of the retiring of the rest to the North of Galilee; or of this new origin of the Nazarenes there. For all these particulars, therefore, learned Sir, you must have some other authority *in petto*, besides that of Mosheim; and you ought to have produced it.

Also, as you adopt the assertions of Mosheim, I could wish to know his authority for supposing, that there was any such thing as a church, or part of a church, of Jewish christians at Jerusalem, after the destruction of that city by Adrian. As to your *additions*, they are a series of such improbable circumstances, as hardly any historian of the time could make credible. Bodies of men do not, whatever you may imagine, suddenly change their opinions, and much less their customs and habits: least of all would an act of *violence* produce that effect;

and, of all mankind, the experiment was the least likely to answer with Jews. If it had produced any effect for a time, the old customs and habits would certainly have returned when the danger was over. You might just as well suppose that all the Jews in Jerusalem began to speak Greek, as well as abandoned their ancient customs, in order to enjoy the valuable privileges of the Ælian colony. And you would have this to alledge in your favour, that from that time the bishops of Jerusalem were all Greeks, the public offices were, no doubt, performed in the Greek language; and the church of Jerusalem was, indeed, in all respects, as much a Greek church, as that of Antioch.

As you say, p. 134. with respect to myself, "that a man ought to be accomplished in ancient learning, who thinks he may escape with impunity, and without detection, in the attempt to brow-beat the world with a peremptory and reiterated allegation of testimonies that exist not;" how much more accomplished ought that man to be, who now writes the history of transactions in the third century without alledging any testimony at all?

Mosheim himself, who began this accusation of Origen, produces no authority, in his Dissertations, for his assertion. He only says that he cannot reconcile the fact that Origen mentions, with his seeming unwillingness to allow the Ebionites to be christians. But this is easily accounted for,

for, from the attachment which he himself had to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, which they denied; and from their holding no communion with other christians.

All the appearance of authority that I can find in any ancient writer, of the Jewish christians deserting the law of their ancestors, is in Sulpicius Severus, to whom I am referred by Mosheim in his history. But what he says on the subject, is only what follows: "At this time Adrian, thinking that he should destroy christianity by destroying the place, erected the images of demons in the church, and in the place of our Lord's sufferings; and because the christians were thought to consist chiefly of Jews (for then the church at Jerusalem had all its clergy of the circumcision) ordered a cohort of soldiers to keep constant guard, and drive all Jews from any access to Jerusalem, which was of service to the christian faith; for at that time they almost all believed Christ to be God, but with the observance of the law; the Lord so disposing it, that the servitude of the law should be removed from the liberty of the faith, and of the church. Then was Marc the first bishop of the Gentiles at Jerusalem *."

Where,

* Qua tempestate Adrianus, existimans se christianam fidem loci injuria perempturum, et in templo ac loco dominice passionis dæmonum simulachra constituit. Et quia christiani ex Judæis potissimum putabantur (namque tum Hierosolymæ non nisi ex circumcisione habebat ecclesia Sacerdotem) militum

Where, Sir, do you find, in this passage, any promise of immunities to the Jewish christians, if they would forsake the law of their fathers. On the contrary, the historian says, that the object of Adrian was to overturn Christianity, and that the Jews were banished because the christians then were chiefly of that nation. According to this account, all the Jews, christians as well as others, were driven out of Jerusalem; and nothing is said of any of them forsaking the law of Moses; and your assertion of their having been gradually prepared for it, by having before this time observed their law more from habit than from conscience, is unsupported by any authority or probability. Eusebius mentions the expulsion of the Jews from Jerusalem, but says not a word of any of the christians there abandoning circumcision, and their other ceremonies on that occasion. Indeed, such a thing was in the highest degree improbable.

Independent of all natural probability, had Sulpitius Severus actually written all that Mosheim advances, and all the curious particulars that you have added to complete the account;

cohorte[m] custodias in perpetuum agitare iussit, quæ Judæos omnes Hierosolymæ aditus arceret. Quod quidem christianæ fidei proficiebat; quia tum pene omnes Christum Deum sub legis observatione credebant, Nimirum id domino ordinante dispositum, ut legis servitus a libertate fidei atque ecclesiæ tolleretur. Ita tum primum Marcus ex Gentibus apud Hierosolymam episcopus fuit. Hist. lib. II. c. xxxi. p. 245.

whether

whether is it, Sir, from this writer, or from Origen, that we are more likely to gain true information on this subject. Origen writing in controversy, and of course subject to correction, appeals to a fact as notorious in the country in which he himself resided, and in his own times, to which therefore he could not but have given particular attention. Whereas Sulpitius Severus lived in the remotest part of Gaul, several thousand miles from Palestine, and two hundred years after Origen, so that he could not have asserted the fact as from his own knowledge, and he quotes no other person for it. But in fact Sulpitius Severus is no more favourable to your account of the matter than Origen himself; so that to the authority of both of them, of all ancient testimony, and natural probability, you have nothing to oppose but your own conjectures, and nothing to plead for this conduct but that your poor and wretched cause requires it.

Having consulted Eusebius, and other ancient writers to no purpose, for some account of these Jews who had deserted the religion of their ancestors, I looked into Tillemont, who is wonderfully careful and exact in bringing together every thing that relates to his subject; but his account of the matter differs widely indeed from Mosheim's and yours. He says (*Hist. des Empereurs*, tom. II. part. ii. p. 506.) "The Jews converted to the faith of Christ were not ex-

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"cepted

“cepted by Adrian from the prohibition to continue at Jerusalem. They were obliged to go out with the rest. But the Jews being then obliged to abandon Jerusalem, that church began to be composed of Gentiles; and before the death of Adrian, in the middle of the year 138, Marc, who was of Gentile race, was established their bishop.” He does not say with Mosheim that this Marc was chosen by the Jews who abandoned the Mosaic rites.” Hist. vol. I. p. 172.

Fleury, I find, had the same idea of that event. He says, Hist. vol. I. p. 316. “From this time the Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem, or even to see it at a distance. The city being afterwards inhabited by Gentiles, had no other name than *Ælia*. — Hitherto the church of Jerusalem had only been composed of Jewish converts, who observed the ritual of the law under the liberty of the gospel; but then as the Jews were forbidden to remain there, and guards were placed to defend the entrance of it, there were no other christians there besides those who were of Gentile origin; and thus the remains of the servitude of the law were entirely abolished.”

Thus ends this church of orthodox Jewish christians at Jerusalem, planted by Mosheim, and pretty well watered by the Archdeacon of St. Albans;

Albans; from which you have derived such great advantage to your argument. But what evidence can you bring that the ancient Jewish church at Jerusalem, even before the time of Adrian, was trinitarian? If they were *Nazarenes*, Epiphanius represents them as unitarian when John wrote; and who was it that converted them from unitarians to trinitarians, and what evidence have you of any such conversion?

What became of the christian Jews who were driven out of Jerusalem by Adrian, does not appear. It is most probable that they joined their brethren at Pella, or Beræa, in Syria, from which they had come to reside at Jerusalem, and, indeed, what became of the whole body of the ancient christian Jews (none of whom can be proved to have been trinitarians) I cannot tell. Their numbers, we may suppose, were gradually reduced, till at length they became extinct. I hope, however, we shall hear no more of them as an evidence of the antiquity of the trinitarian doctrine.

I cannot help, in this place, taking some farther notice of what you say with respect to this charge of a wilful falsehood on Origen. "Time was," you say, p. 160. "when the practice" (viz. of using unjustifiable means to serve a good end) "was openly avowed, and Origen himself was among its defenders." This, Sir, as is usual with you, is much too strongly stated, and as you mention no authorities, you might think to escape detection.

I believe,

I believe, indeed, you went no farther than Mosheim for it. Jerom, in his epistle to Pammachius, Opera, vol. I. p. 496. says, that Origen adopted the Platonic doctrine (and you, Sir, are an admirer of Plato) of the subserviency of truth to utility, as with respect to deceiving enemies, &c. as Mr. Hume, and other speculative moralists have done; considering the foundation of all social virtue to be the public good. But, Sir, it by no means follows from this, that such persons will ever indulge themselves in any greater violations of truth than those who hold other speculative opinions concerning the foundation of morals.

Jerom was far from saying as you do, that "he reduced his theory to practice." He mentions no instance whatever of his having recourse to it, and is far, indeed, from vindicating you in asserting, p. 160. that "the art which he recommended he scrupled not to employ; and that, to silence an adversary, he had recourse to the wilful and deliberate allegation of a notorious falsehood." Here, Sir, is much more in the conclusion than the premises will warrant. Many persons hold speculative principles, which their adversaries think must necessarily lead to immorality; but those who hold them should be heard on the subject; and the conclusion will not be just, unless they themselves connect immoral practices with their principles. I find, Sir, that the characters of the *dead* are no safer in your hands than those of the *living*. I am unwilling to say a harsh thing, and I wish to avoid it the more,
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lest I should be thought *to return railing for railing*; but really, unless you can make a better apology for yourself, than I am able to suggest, you will be considered by impartial persons, as a *falsifier of history*, and a *defamer of the character of the dead*, in order to serve your purpose.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R V.

Of Heresy in the earliest times.

REV. SIR,

I asserted that the unitarians were not originally considered as *heretics*, and for this I have adduced a variety of arguments, one of the principal of which is, that the apostle John, though, according to all the evidence of antiquity, he could not but have known that unitarians were numerous in his time, never censures them; whereas he writes with the greatest indignation against the tenets which belonged to the opposite system of Gnosticism. I observed the same with respect to Hegesippus, Justin Martyr, and Clemens Alexandrinus. I now find the same to be true of Polycarp and Ignatius, and
that

that even Irenæus, Tertullian, and Origen, did not treat the unitarians as heretics.

You insist upon it, however, that John does censure the unitarian doctrine; which is curious enough, when, according to your account, there were no Ebionites or Nazarenes, that is, none who denied the pre-existence of Christ, till long after the time of John. But, passing this, you acknowledge that the phrase *coming in the flesh* alludes to the proper humanity of Christ, and therefore respects the Gnostics; but you maintain that it likewise alludes to a *prior state*; so that we may necessarily infer from it, that he was a being of a higher rank before his coming in the flesh.

You say, p. 27. "The attempt to assign a reason why the Redeemer should be a man, implies both that he might have been, without partaking of the human nature, and by consequence that, in his own proper nature, he was originally something different from man; and that there might have been an expectation that he would make his appearance in some form above the human." But it is certainly quite sufficient to account for the apostle's using that phrase *coming in the flesh*, that in his time there actually existed an opinion that Christ was not truly a man, but was a being of a higher order, which was precisely the doctrine of the Gnostics. That before the appearance of the Messiah, any persons

persons expected that he would, or might come in a form above the human I absolutely deny.

"A reason," you say, p. 27, "why a man should be a man, one would not expect in a sober man's discourse." But certainly, it was very proper to give a reason why one who was *not* thought to be properly a man, was really so; which is what the apostle has done.

As you call upon me so loudly to give any proof that the phrase *coming in the flesh* is descriptive of the Gnostic heresy only, and not of the unitarian doctrine also, I shall give an answer that may perhaps satisfy you, which is, that it is so used in the epistle of Polycarp, the disciple of John. In a passage in this epistle, in which the writer evidently alludes to the Gnostics only, he introduces this very phrase, *coming in the flesh*. See sect. vi. vii. in Abp. Wake's translation, p. 55. "Being zealous of what is good, abstaining from all offence, and from false brethren, and from those who bear the name of Christ in hypocrisy, and who deceive vain men. For whosoever does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, he is Antichrist, and whosoever does not confess his suffering upon the cross is from the devil; and whosoever perverts the oracles of God to his own interests, and says, that there shall be neither any resurrection, nor judgment, he is the first-born of satan. Wherefore, leaving the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return

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"to

"to the word that was delivered from the beginning."

Had this writer proceeded no farther than the second clause, in which he mentions those who did not believe that Christ suffered upon the cross, it might have been supposed, that he alluded to *two* classes of men, and that the latter were different from those who denied that he came in the flesh. But as he goes on to mention a third circumstance, viz. the denial of the resurrection, and we are sure that those were not a third class of persons, it is evident that he alluded to no more than one and the same kind of persons by all the three characters. I conclude, therefore, that the apostle John, from whom the writer of this epistle had this phrase, used it in the same sense, and meant by it only those persons who believed that Christ was not truly man, i. e. the Gnostics.

Besides, is it not extraordinary, that if this apostle conceived the indignation that you suppose him to have entertained against the unitarians, he should give no intimation of it except in this one ambiguous expression? You own that he marks the Gnostics clearly enough, and expresses the strongest aversion to them. How came he then to spare the unitarians, who have been so odious since? You must own that, in the course of his gospel, he inserts many expressions which, when literally interpreted, militate strongly against the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; as when, according to him,

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our Saviour says *the Father is greater than I; I can do nothing of myself; I live by the Father; the Father within me he doth the works. The Father is the only true God, &c.* If the apostle knew that there were in his time those who believed that Christ was a mere man, while he himself believed him to be God, is it not extraordinary that he should give them such an advantage from the language of our Saviour in his own gospel; and that he should have taken no care to qualify or explain it? Persons who are aware of a dangerous opinion, and wish to guard others against it, do not write as he does.

You will probably say, that John taught the divinity of Christ with sufficient clearness in the introduction to his gospel, which might serve as a guard against any mistake with respect to such expressions as those above quoted. But it appears that the ancient unitarians understood that introduction as we now do, taking the *logos* to mean not *Christ*, but the *wisdom and power of God* residing in him, and acting by him. The Noetian, in Hippolytus, says, "You tell me something new, "when you call the Son *logos* *." And the oldest opinion on the subject is, that in that introduction John alluded to the Gnostics only, as he did in his epistles.

* Αλλ' ἐπεὶ μοι τις, ζενον μοι φερεις λεγον λεγων υιον.
Contra Noetum, sect. xv. p. 16.

Ignatius also frequently mentions *heresy*, and *heretics*, and, like John and Polycarp, with great indignation; but it is evident to every person who is at all acquainted with the history, learning, and language of those times, and of the subsequent ones, that he had no persons in his eye but the Gnostics only. I desire no other evidence of this, besides a careful inspection of the passages. I shall recite only one of them, from the epistle to the Smyrnæans, sect. iv. v. in Wake's translation, p. 116. Speaking of his own sufferings, he says, "he
 " who was made a perfect man strengthening me.
 " Whom some not knowing do deny, or rather
 " have been denied by him, being the advocates
 " of death, rather than of the truth, whom neither
 " the prophets, nor the law of Moses have per-
 " suaded, nor the gospel itself, even to this day,
 " nor the sufferings of every one of us. For they
 " think also the same things of us. For what does
 " a man profit me if he shall praise me, and blas-
 " pheme my Lord, not confessing that he was
 " truly made a man. Now he that doth not say
 " this, does in effect deny him, and is in death.
 " But for the names of such as do this, they being
 " unbelievers, I thought it not fitting to write them
 " unto you. Yea God forbid that I should make
 " any mention of them till they shall repent, to a
 " true belief of Christ's passion, which is our re-
 " surrection. Let no man deceive himself," &c.
 He afterwards speaks of these persons abstaining
 from the eucharist, and the public offices, " because

" they

"they confessed not the eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father of his goodness raised again from the dead. It will, therefore," he adds, "become you to abstain from such persons, and not to speak with them, neither in private nor in public."

How like is this to the writings of the apostle John, and how well they explain each other. Here we see the *blasphemy* ascribed to the Gnostics, which Justin mentions, their separating themselves from the communion of christians, their denying the resurrection, and their pride. Now, how came this writer, like John, never to censure the unitarians, if he had thought them to be heretics? That they existed in his time, there never was a doubt, except what is just started in this last publication of yours. It can only be accounted for on the supposition that he himself, as well as the apostle John, were unitarians, and that they had no idea of any *heresies* besides those of the different kinds of Gnostics.

Pearson says, that Ignatius refers to the doctrine of the Ebionites in his epistle to Polycarp, and in those to the Ephesians, the Magnesians, and the Philadelphians; but I find no such references in them, except perhaps two passages which may easily be supposed to have been altered; because, when corrected by an unitarian, nothing is wanting to the evident purpose of the

writer ; whereas his censures of the Gnostics are frequent and copious ; so that no person can pretend to leave them out, without materially injuring the epistles.

Besides, there are in these epistles of Ignatius, several things that are unfavourable to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ. Thus to the Ephesians, he says, sect. v. "How much more
" must I think you happy who are so joined to
" him [the bishop] as the church is to Jesus
" Christ, and Jesus Christ to the Father, that so
" all things may agree in the same unity." To the Magnesians, sect. vii. he says, "As therefore
" the Lord did nothing without the Father,
" being united to him, neither by himself nor
" yet by his apostles ; so neither do ye any thing
" without your bishop and presbyters."

What this excellent man said when he appeared before the Emperor Trajan, was the language of an unitarian. "You err," he said "in that you
" call the evil spirits of the heathens, gods. For
" there is but one God, who made heaven and
" earth, and the sea, and all that are in them ;
" and one Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son,
" whose kingdom may I enjoy." Wake, p. 131.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VI.

*Of the sentiments of Justin Martyr, Irenæus, and
Clemens Alexandrinus, concerning Heresy.*

REV. SIR,

IF after what I have seen in your *Charge*, and in these *Letters*, I could be surprized at any thing you say on these subjects, it would be at your so confidently maintaining, p. 79. that Justin Martyr had a view to the unitarians in those accounts of *heresy in general*, which I quoted from him; when any person, with a small portion of that reading of which you pretend to so much, must know that every word and phrase in those accounts, especially the charge of *pride, atheism, and blasphemy*, is appropriated to the Gnostics, and the Gnostics only. I must take the liberty to say, that you know nothing at all of the ancient ecclesiastical writers, if you can imagine that the unitarians are ever described by them in this manner. I am even ashamed to argue with any man who, if he has read the early fathers at all, has read them to so little purpose.

To me it is indisputably clear, that Justin Martyr considered no other class of persons as heretics, unfit to have communion with christians, but the Gnostics only. Let any reasonable man but compare these passages in which he

censures the Gnostics with so much severity, with those in which he speaks of the unitarians (in which I still am of opinion he makes an apology to them for his own principles, but which certainly imply no censure) and I think he cannot but conclude with me, that unitarianism was considered in those times in a very different light from what it was afterwards, and is now.

Justin also particularly mentions his having no objection to hold communion with those Jewish christians who observed the law of Moses, provided they did not impose it upon others. Dial. p. 23*. Now who could those be, but Jewish unitarians? for, agreeable to the evidence of all antiquity, all the Jewish christians were such.

It is truly remarkable, and may not have been observed by you, as indeed it was not by myself till very lately, that Irenæus, who has written

* This circumstance may throw some light on the passage in Jerom, in which he speaks of the Ebionites as anathematized solely on account of their adherence to the Jewish law. The Ebionites, at least many of them, would have imposed the yoke of the Jewish law upon the Gentile christians, they would not communicate with those who were not circumcised, and of course these could not communicate with them; so they were necessarily in a state of excommunication with respect to each other. This would also be the case with the Cerinthians as well as the Ebionites, and therefore Jerom mentions them together, the separation of communion, with respect to both arising from the observance of the law of Moses; though Jerom might write unguardedly, as he often did, in confounding the case of the Cerinthians so much as he here does with that of the Ebionites.

so large a work on the subject of heresy, after the time of Justin, and in a country where it is probable there were fewer unitarians, again and again characterizes them in such a manner, as makes it evident, that even *he* did not consider any other persons as being properly heretics besides the Gnostics; He expresses a great dislike of the Ebionites; but though he appears to have known none of them besides those who denied the miraculous conception, he never calls them *heretics*. I had thought that in one passage he had included them in that appellation; but observing that in his introduction, and other places, in which he speaks of *heretics in general*, he evidently meant the Gnostics only, and could not carry his views any farther, I was led to reconsider that particular passage, and I found that I had been mistaken in my construction of it.

“All heretics,” he says, “being untaught and ignorant of the dispensations of God, and especially of that which relates to man, as being blind with respect to the truth, oppose their own salvation; some introducing another father besides the maker of the world, others saying that the world and the matter of it was made by angels,” &c. and after mentioning other similar opinions, he adds, “others not knowing the dispensation of the virgin, say that he (Jesus) was begotten by Joseph. Some say that neither the soul nor the body can receive eternal life, but the internal man only*,” i. e. that they denied the resurrection.

* *Indocti omnes heretici, et ignorantes dispositiones Dei, et inscii ejus quæ est secundum hominem dispensationis, quippe cæcutientes*

Now as Cerinthus, and Carpocrates, and other Gnostics, denied the miraculous conception, as well as the Ebionites, and all the rest of this description, both before and after this circumstance, evidently belongs to the Gnostics only, and as in no other place whatever does he comprehend them in his definition of *heresy*, it is natural to conclude that he had no view to them even here, but only to those Gnostics, who, in common with them, denied the miraculous conception. If there be any other passage in Irenæus in which he calls, or seems to call, the Ebionites *heretics*, I have overlooked it. The Ebionites were Jews, and had no communion with the Gentiles, at least that appears; and Irenæus says nothing at all of the unitarians among the Gentiles, who generally believed the miraculous conception, though, as appears from other evidence, they constituted the great mass of the unlearned christians.

Clemens Alexandrinus makes frequent mention of heretics, and expresses as much abhorrence of them as Justin Martyr does; but it is evident, that in all the places in which he speaks of them, his idea of heresy was confined to Gnosticism. He con-

cæcutientes circa veritatem, ipsi suæ contradicunt salutî. Alii quidem alterum introducentes præter demiurgum patrem. Alii autem ab angelis quibusdam dicentes factum esse mundum, et substantiam ejus, &c. Alii autem rursus ignorantes Virginis dispensationem, ex Joseph dicunt eum generatum. Et quidam quidem neque animam suam neque corpus recipere posse dicunt æternam vitam, sed tantum hominem interiorem. Lib. V. cap. xix. p. 429.

siders

siders it as an answer to *all heretics* to prove that "there is one God, the almighty Lord, who was "preached by the law and the prophets, and also "in the blessed gospel*." He also speaks of heresy as "borrowed from a barbarous philosophy;" and says of heretics, that "though they say there is one "God, and sing hymns to Christ, it was not accord- "ing to truth; for that they introduced another God, "and such a Christ as the prophets had not foretold." Strom. Lib. VI. p. 675. See also p. 542. 662. He likewise speaks of heretics in general, as having a high opinion of their own knowledge, *οἰσιν γνωσης εἰληφοῖων*. Strom. Lib. VII. p. 754. He calls them *δοξισοφοι*, *men who think that they have found the truth*, p. 755. and *υποδοξοφιας επηρμενοι*, *elated with a conceit of their knowledge*, p. 759. He says that "heresy began in the time of Adrian," when it is well known that Basilides, and the most distinguished of the Gnostics made their appearance. Strom Lib. VII. p. 764. He says the heretics went by different names, as those of Valentinus, Marcion, and Basilides, mentioning none but Gnostics, p. 765. It may only be conjectured that he meant the Ebionites by the *Peratici*, enumerated by him among those who had their denomination from the place of their residence. But this is the only passage in which the word occurs. He never includes the Gentile unitarians among heretics, and even your great authority, Mosheim, allows (what

* *Και απασαις επτενθενταις αιρεσεσιν ενδεικνυναι θεον κ̅υριον παντοκρατορα, τον δια νομου κ̅υ προφητων, προς δε κ̅υ μακαρις ευαγγελις γνωσιως κεκηρυγμενον*. Strom. Lib. VI. p. 475.

indeed

indeed he could not deny) that the unitarians lived in communion with the catholic church in the early ages.

As the strict Ebionites held no communion with the Gentile christians, it is very possible that Clemens Alexandrinus might insert them in a catalogue of heretics, and allude to them under the name of *Peratici*, without intending any censure of their doctrine with respect to Christ. Besides, this was a name given them, as he says, from their place of residence, and therefore did not include the unitarians among the Gentiles.

It is clear to me from the attention that I have lately given to this subject, that even long after the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was established by councils, and the decrees of emperors, the common people were well known to believe nothing of the matter; and yet, if they made no disturbance, and did not think proper to separate from the communion of the orthodox themselves, they were not excommunicated. This may be inferred from the passage which I quoted from Athanasius; but of which you have taken no notice, from which it appears that the unitarians were the *οἱ πολλοί*, *the many*. In the time of Tertullian they were the *major pars credentium*, *the greater part of believers*; and in the time of Origen they were the *το πλῆθος*, *the multitude*, and the *τα πλῆθη* *the multitudes*.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VII.

Of the state of Heresy in the time of Tertullian.

REV. SIR,

NOTHING can well be more evident than that Tertullian represents the great body of unlearned christians in his time as unitarians, and even holding the doctrine of the trinity in great abhorrence. It is hardly possible, in any form of words, to describe this state of things more clearly than he does. Indeed, with respect to this you are pleased to make some concession, though by no means such as the case requires.

"I must confess, Sir," you say, p. 74, "here
 "seems to be a complaint against the unlearned
 "christians, as in general unfavourable to the tri-
 "nitarian doctrine;" but you add, "the com-
 "plaint is of your own raising. Tertullian will
 "vouch but, for a small part of it. *Simple per-
 "sons, says Tertullian (not to call them ignorant
 "and ideots) who always make the majority of be-
 "lievers, because the rule of faith itself carries us
 "away from the many gods of the heathens, to the
 "one true God; not understanding that one God is
 "indeed to be believed, but with an OECONOMY (or
 "arrangement) startle at the æconomy. They take
 "it for granted that the number and disposition of
 "the trinity is a division of the unity. They pretend
 "that*

"that two, and even three are preached by us, and
 "imagine that they themselves are the worshippers of
 "one God. We, they say, hold the monarchy. La-
 "tins have caught up the word MONARCHIA; Greeks
 "will not understand OECONOMIA. Let our au-
 "thor's words be thus exactly rendered, and you
 "will find in them neither complaint, nor ac-
 "knowledgment, of a general prevalence of
 "the unitarian doctrine among christians of any
 "rank. Tertullian alleges, that what credit it
 "obtained was only with the illiterate, nor with
 "all the illiterate, but only those who were igno-
 "rant, and stupid in the extreme. To preclude
 "the plea of numbers, he remarks, that the illite-
 "rate will always make the majority of believers.
 "Some simple people, he says, take alarm at the
 "notion of a plurality of persons in the unity of
 "the godhead."

Here, Sir, I complain of two gross misrep-
 resentations of your author, the first respects the
number of these simple people, and the second the
 degree of their simplicity, or as you call it *stupi-*
dity. Whoever Tertullian meant by the *simplices*
 and the *idiotæ*, for any thing that appears, he
 meant the whole body of them. His language
 is general, and unlimited, and therefore you are
 altogether unwarranted in your limitation of it
 to *some of them*. I really wonder at your assurance
 in this. I am far from construing Tertullian
 rigorously, and am ready to allow that *some* of
 these *simplices* and *idiotæ* might profess to believe
 the

the doctrine of the trinity, though he says nothing of it; but making all reasonable deductions on this account, he asserts a palpable falsehood, and against himself, if a very great majority of these *simplices* and *idiotæ* were not unitarians. On the whole, it is impossible not to infer from this passage, that, in the time of Tertullian, the great body of unlearned christians were unitarians, and that they were so in part from their construction of the *regula fidei*, or *the creed*, to which they gave their assent at baptism. They even regarded the doctrine of the trinity with horror, as nothing less than idolatry, enjoining the worship of more gods than one. Common sense can put no other construction on this passage, and Tertullian is far from being singular in this acknowledgment. It is made in different modes by several of the fathers, even later than the age of Tertullian.

In the next place, I complain of the *degree* of simplicity, or, as you call it, stupidity with which you charge these unitarians. Tertullian calls them *idiotæ*, which you render *ideots*, and this you have the assurance to call an *exact translation*. You say, p. 91. that I consult only the *ordinary lexicons*. Pray, Sir, in what lexicon or dictionary, ordinary or extraordinary, did you find this sense of the term *idiotæ*, in Latin, or *ιδιωτης* in Greek? Can you produce any passage in an ancient writer in which the word has that meaning? I will venture to say that it properly signifies *an unlearned man*,

man, or a person who has not had a learned or liberal education. But such persons may have as good sense as those who have had that advantage, and may judge as truly concerning the great principles of religion as the most learned. The doctrine of one God, or two Gods, requires no knowledge of the learned languages, and you, Sir, perhaps would have understood christianity no worse, if you had never heard of the *Parmenides*.

It is most natural to interpret the language of any writer by the use of it in other writers of the same age, character, and profession. Now the translator of Irenæus certainly uses the word *idiot* (*ἰδιώτης*, no doubt, in the original Greek) for an *unlearned man*, without the least reference to any weakness of understanding. Speaking of the heretics, who boasted of their knowledge, he says, lib. V. cap. xx. “Non contemplantes quanto
“ pluris sit *idiot* religiosus a blasphemus et im-
“ pudens sophista: Not considering how much
“ better is a religious and unlearned man, than a
“ blasphemous and impious sophist.” Certainly you would not render it a *religious idiot*, for idiots are incapable of religion. From the *blasphemy* here ascribed to heretics, who were Gnostics, you may also take a hint for the right understanding of the quotation from Justin.

Theodoret, in his explanation of 1 Cor. xiv. 16. says, that “ by *ἰδιώτης* was meant a *layman*, because it is the custom to call those *ἰδιώταις* who
“ were

"were not engaged in war;" meaning, perhaps, "those who had no public employments." Opera, vol. III. p. 191.

Our translators of the New Testament had a very different idea from yours of the meaning of the word *idiot*. For in Acts iv. 13. we read that when Peter and John were examined before the High Priest, and his kindred, "they wondered at their boldness, because they perceived them to be *idiotai*;" but it is not rendered *ideots*, which would have been absurd enough, but *unlearned and ignorant men*. In 1 Cor. xiv. the word occurs three times, and is always translated *unlearned*; and in 2 Cor. xi. 6. Paul calls himself *idiot*, and he could not be supposed to have called himself *an idiot*. It is there rendered *rude*.

One of your proofs, p. 83. that unitarianism was proscribed in the primitive church in the time of Tertullian, is his saying that the *regula fidei* in his treatise *de Præscriptione* was the belief of all christians. But every writer, if we wish not to cavil, but to understand his real meaning, must be interpreted in a manner consistent with himself. It is a degree of candour that is due to all writers; and what you strongly plead for in the case of Eusebius. Now, concerning what we now call *the apostles creed*, Tertullian expresses himself in such a manner (in his treatise *de Virginibus Velandis*) as gives us clearly to understand that this was all that was necessary to the faith of a christian.

tian. This creed might be subscribed by any unitarian who believed the miraculous conception. The other creed, therefore, which is not the apostles, must be his own comment or exposition of the proper *regula fidei*, or creed (and indeed it has all the appearance of a comment, as may be seen by the comparison) and all that we can conclude from it, is that it contains his own opinion, which is well known from his writings in general.

To prove that the *regula fidei* in the treatise *de Præscriptione* was the belief of all christians in that age, you must prove that it was the creed that all christians gave their assent to; and this assent was only given at the time of baptism. But that *regula fidei* (which supposes the pre-existence of Christ) is no where to be found but in this particular passage in the writings of Tertullian; whereas that which is called *the apostles creed* is, with some variations, frequently mentioned, and is known to have been the only creed that was used at baptism in the time of Tertullian, and long afterwards.

That Tertullian alluded to none but the Gnostics in the *regula fidei* of his treatise *de Præscriptione* is evident from every clause in it, and from the object of the work, which respects the Gnostics only, the unitarians being only occasionally and slightly mentioned in it. Though, therefore, a single feature in this account is found in the

the unitarians, as well as in the Gnostics, it is the *whole character* that we are to attend to, and not that feature in particular.

In all other places in which I have found Tertullian to speak of *heresy in general*, it is most evident that his ideas went no farther than to the opinions of the Gnostics, except that he once calls Hebion a heretic, and then he expressly makes his heresy to consist in his observance of the Jewish ritual*.

"Heresies," he says, "do not differ from idolatry, having the same author, and the same work with idolaters; for that they make another God against the creator; or, if they acknowledge one creator, they discourse of him in a manner different from the truth†. Heretics," he says, "deny that God is to be feared‡", which agrees with his saying that the heathen philosophers were the patriarchs of heresy§, for they held that doctrine; but it was very remote from any thing that is ever laid to the charge of the unitarians.

* Ad Galatas scribens invehitur in observatores et defensores circumcisionis et legis. Hebionis hæresis est. De Præf. f. xxxiii. p. 214.

† Neque ab idolatria distare hæreses, cum et auctoris et operis ejusdem sint cujus et idolatria. Deum aut fingunt alium adversus creatorem, aut si unicum creatorem consentunt, aliter eum disserunt quam in vero. De Præscriptione, f. xl. Opera p. 217.

‡ Negant deum timendum. De Præf. f. xl.iii. p. 218.

§ Hæreticorum patriarchæ philosophi. Ad. Herm. f. viii. p. 236.

“Heretics,” he says, “associated with the magi, with fortune-tellers, with astrologers, with philosophers; being actuated by a principle of curiosity; so that the quality of their faith may be judged of from their manner of life; for discipline is the index of doctrine*.”

The whole of this account is inconsistent with Tertullian's considering unitarians as heretics, but much more is his saying, that “the Valentinians were the most numerous of all the heretics†,” and that “the heretics had nothing to do with their discipline. Their want of communion,” he says, “shews that they are foreign to us‡.” For it is most evident that those whom he calls *simplices* and *idiotæ*, were ranked by him among the *credentes*, or *believers*. They were even the *major pars credentium*, though unitarians, and holding the doctrine of the trinity in abhorrence.

Let any person judge from the whole of this, if it must not have been inconsiderate, at least, in Ter-

* Notata etiam sunt commercia hæreticorum cum magis, quam pluribus, cum circulatoribus, cum astrologis, cum philosophis, curiositati scilicet deditis. — Adeo et de genere conversationis qualitas fidei æstimari potest: doctrinæ index disciplina est. De Præscriptione, f. xliii. p. 218.

† Valentiniani frequentissimum plani collegium inter hæreticos. Ad Valent. f. i. p. 250.

‡ Hæretici autem nullum habent consortium nostræ disciplinæ, quos extraneos utique testatur ipsa ademptio communicationis. De Baptismo, f. xv. p. 230.

tullian, and inconsistent with himself, to call those persons heretics, who could not subscribe to that form of the creed which includes the article of pre-existence, and which was not assented to at baptism.

Tertullian also recites the articles of the creed in a third form, in his book against Praxeas. But as in the former he evidently had a view to the Gnostics only, so in this, he had a view to the opinions of Praxeas, whom he was refuting. This, therefore, as well as the other, though delivered in the form of a creed, and said to be held by all christians, can only be considered as his own comment upon it, and as containing his own opinion. It is as follows :

“ We believe in one God, but under that dispensation which we call the *economy*; so that there is also a son of this one God, his word, who proceeded from him, by whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made that was made; that he was sent by the Father into a virgin, and of her born man and God, the son of man, and the son of God, and called Jesus Christ; that he suffered, died, and was buried, according to the scriptures; that he was raised by the Father, and taken up into heaven; that he sits at the right-hand of the Father, and will come to judge the living and the dead; who thence, according to his promise, sent from the Father the holy spirit, the comforter, and the sanctifier of the faith of

“those who believe in the father, the son, and the
“holy spirit*.”

Let the impartial reader then judge, whether we are not more likely to find the genuine proper creed, which was considered as containing the *faith of all christians*, unmixed with any peculiar opinions of Tertullian's own, in the treatise *de Virginibus Velandis*, in which he is not opposing *orthodoxy* to *beterodoxy*, but simply *faith to practice*.

I am really surprized that you should lay so much stress on the testimony of Tertullian, admitting it to be clear and uniform, which it is far from being, and also on that of Eusebius, with respect to the general faith of christians even in their own times, and much more in times preceding them; when it is so common for men to represent the opinions of those whom they esteem as the same with their own. Every man should be heard with caution when he

* Unicum quidem deum credimus, sub hac tamen dispensatione quam œconomiam dicimus, ut unū dei sit et filius sermo ipsius, qui ex ipso processerit, per quem omnia facta sunt, et sine quo factum est nihil; hunc missum a patre in virginem, et ex ea natum hominem et deum, filium hominis et filium dei, et cognominatum Jesum Christum. Hunc passum, hunc mortuum, et sepultum, secundum scripturas, et resuscitatum a patre, et in cœlos resumptum, sedere ad dextram patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos, qui exinde miserit, secundum promissionem suam, a patre spiritum sanctum, paracletum, sanctificatorem fidei eorum qui credunt in patrem et filium et spiritum sanctum. Hanc regulam ab initio evangelii decucurrisse, &c. Ad. Praxeam, f. ii. p. 501.

praises

praises himself; and what he says in one place should be compared with what he says in another, and especially what he drops, as it were, accidentally, and when he was off his guard. As I said before, "their evidence in these cases is not to be regarded, unless they bring some sufficient proof of their assertions,"

Had Tertullian, Origen, and others, thought more highly of the *common people* than they did, we should probably never have known from them what their opinions were. But happily for us, they thought meanly of them, and, without being aware of the use and value of the information, have given us sufficient lights into this very important circumstance in the history of their times. But in this, as well as in several other respects, you, Sir, have been led into several mistakes through your ignorance of human nature; the knowledge of which, and a due attention to it, would have been of much more service to you in these enquiries, than your knowledge of Greek, in which, however, I do not perceive that you greatly abound. This ignorance of human nature appears in your insisting, p. 174. that if I admit the evidence of Eusebius for the existence of the Ebionites in the time of the apostles, I must admit his testimony to their condemnation of them.

As Theodotus who appeared in the time of Tertullian is called a heretic in the appendix to Tertullian's book *De Præscriptione*, I think it probable that, after his excommunication, he formed

a church of pure unitarians, and might be the first who set up a separate place of worship on that account, and therefore was denominated an *heretic* in the original sense of that word; and this circumstance might give rise to the opinion that he was the first who taught the doctrine.

When Eusebius wrote so as evidently to suppose that the Ebionites existed in the time of the apostles, you say, p. 173, "I consider it as an hasty assertion of a writer over-zealous to overwhelm his adversary by authorities." I suspect that he may have been guilty of something like this; when he said that Theodotus was excommunicated by Victor on account of his unitarian principles. That he was excommunicated I admit, but that his unitarian principles was the sole ground of his excommunication, I have some doubt, considering your own idea of the credit of the witness, which indeed is pretty much the same as my own.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R VIII.

Of Origen's idea of Heresy.

REV. SIR,

WHAT I have said concerning Clemens Alexandrinus and Tertullian, is true also of Origen, and these writers may help to explain each other. No man took more pains to inculcate the doctrine of the *logos* than Origen, and he thought meanly of those christians who did not adopt it, considering them as of an inferior rank; but I believe he never classes them with *heretics*; and whenever he speaks of *heretics in general*, he, as well as all preceding writers, evidently had a view to the Gnostics only. See his *Commentary on Matt.* vol. I. p. 156, 159, 212, 287, 475, and many other passages in his writings.

In his treatise entitled *Philosophumena*, which is the first of his books against the heretics, it is evident that he considered none in that light besides the Gnostics, see p. 6. 8. and 16. of that work, as published by Wolfius, at Hamburg, in 1706.

In one place he evidently considers the unitarians and heretics separately, as two distinct classes of men; but supposes that the unitarians confounded the persons of the father and the son, on which account they were called *Patripassians*. But notwithstanding

withstanding the evil that he says of them, he acknowledges that they adhered to their opinion as thinking that it did honour to Christ, as on other occasions he ascribes it to their regard to the one true God the Father. "We are not," says he, "to consider those as taking the part of Christ who think falsely concerning him, out of an idea of doing him honour. Such are those who confound the intellect of the Father and the Son, distinguishing their substance in idea and name only; and also the *heretics*, who, out of a desire of speaking magnificently concerning him, carry their blasphemy very high, even to the maker of the world, are not on his side*."

It is evident to me that in the time of Origen, viz. the beginning of the third century, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was so far from being generally received, except by the bishops and the more learned of the clergy, that it was considered as a sublime doctrine, proper indeed for persons who had made advances in divine knowledge, but not adapted to the vulgar, who were content with the plain doctrine of Jesus Christ and him crucified,

* Ου νομίζουσιν γὰρ εἶναι ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ τὰς ταῦ θεοῦ φρονήσεις περὶ αὐτοῦ φαντασία, τὴν δοξαζέειν αὐτὸν, ὅποιοι εἰσιν συγχύειν πατέρα καὶ υἱὸν ἐννοεῖν, καὶ τὴν ὑποτάσσειν ἐν αὐτῷ διδοῦντες εἶναι τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν, τὴν ἐπινοήσαντες, καὶ τοῖς ὀνόματι, διαμεμενῆς τὸ ἐν ὑποκειμένον. καὶ οἱ ἀπὸ τῶν αἵρέσεων, φαντασία τὴν μεγάλην περὶ αὐτοῦ φρονεῖν, ἀδικίαν εἰς τὸ ὑψοῦν αὐτὸν, καὶ κακῶς λεγούσας τοῦ δημιουργοῦ, καὶ εἶναι ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ. Comment. in Matt. vol. I. p. 471.

looking

looking no farther than to his humanity, as it is delivered in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John's doctrine of the *logos* was thought to be too sublime for the generality of Christians.

"No one," says Origen, "taught the divinity of Christ so clearly as John, who presents him to us, saying, I am the light of the world, I am the way, the truth, and the life; I am the resurrection; I am the gate; I am the good shepherd; and in the Revelation, I am the *alpha* and *omega*, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. We may therefore boldly say, that as the gospels are the first fruits (or most excellent part) of the scriptures, so the gospel of John is the first fruits of the gospels; the sense of which no person can conceive except he who reclines on the breast of Jesus, and who can receive from Jesus his mother Mary, and make her his own. He must be another John who was shewn by Jesus as another Jesus. For, he who is perfect does not himself live, but Christ lives in him; and since Christ lives in him, he says to Mary concerning him, behold thy son, Christ himself*."

"This,"

* Ουδεις γαρ εκεινων ακρως φανερωσε αυτη την θεοτητα ως Ιωαννης, παρασησας αυτον λεγοντα, εγω ειμι το φως του κοσμου, εγω ειμι η οδος, η αληθεια, η ζωη. εγω ειμι η ανασασις. εγω ειμι η θυρα, εγω ειμι ο ποιμην, ο καλος. η ωτι αποκαλυψει, εγω ειμι το α η το ω, η αρχη η το τελος, ο πρωτος η ο εσχατος. το λημνησειον ταιτων ειπεν απ αρχην μεν

"This," says he, "we ought to understand, that as the law was a shadow of good things to come, so is the gospel as it is understood by the generality. But that which John calls the *everlasting gospel*, and which may be more properly called the *spiritual*, instructs the intelligent very clearly concerning the Son of God. Wherefore the gospel must be taught both corporeally and spiritually; and when it is necessary we must preach the corporeal gospel, saying to the carnal that we know nothing but Jesus Christ and him crucified. But when persons are found confirmed in the spirit, bringing forth fruits in it, and in love with heavenly wisdom, we must impart to them the *logos* returning from his bodily state, in that he was in the beginning with God *."

"There,

μεν πασων γραφων ειναι τα ευαγγελια, των δε ευαγγελιων
απαρχην το καλ' Ιωαννην, ε τον ενν υδεις δυναται λαβειν μη
αναπιστων επι το σηθ' Ιησν, μηδε λαβαν απο Ιησν την
Μαριαν γενομενην κ' αυτη μητερα; κ' τηλικησιν δε γενεσαι δι
τον εσομεγον αλλον Ιωαννην, ως τε οιοσι τον Ιωαννην λειχθηναι
οντα Ιησν απο Ιησν—κ' γαρ πας ο τελετωμενος ζη εκετι,
αλλ εν αυτω ζη Χριστος, κ' εσται ζη εν αυτω Χρισθ', λεγεται
παρι αυτη τη Μαρια, ιδε ο υιθ' σου ο Χρισθ'. Comment in
Johan. vol. II. p. 5.

* Και τελο δε ειδηναι εχον, οτι ωσπερ εστι νομου σκια
παρεχων των μελλοντων αγαθων, υπο τε καλ' αληθειαν
καταγγελλομενη νομου δηλωνμενων; κ' ταυτην ευαγγελιον σκια
μυστηριων Χριστ' διδασκει, το νομιζομενον υπο παντων των
εντογχαροντων νοεισθαι. Ο δε φησιν Ιωαννης ευαγγελιον αιωνιον,
φικειως αν λεχθησομενον πνευματικον, σαφως παριστησι τοις
βουσι

"There are," says he, "who partake of the
 "logos which was from the beginning, the logos
 "that was with God, and the logos that was
 "God, as Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, and any
 "others that speak of him as the logos of God,
 "and the logos that was with him; but there
 "are others who know nothing but Jesus Christ
 "and him crucified, the logos that was made
 "flesh; thinking they have every thing of the
 "logos when they acknowledge Christ accord-
 "ing to the flesh. Such is the multitude of those
 "who are called christians*."

"Again, he says, "the multitudes (i. e. the
 "great mass or body) of believers are instructed
 "in the shadow of the logos, and not in the

ἰουσι τὰ πάντα ἐνώπιον περὶ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. — Διὸ πὲρ ἀναγκαῖον
 πνευματικῶς καὶ σωματικῶς Χριστιανίζειν καὶ ὅτε μὲν χρητὸς
 τοῦ σωματικοῦ κηρύσσειν εὐαγγελιστὴν, φασκόντα μὴδὲν εἶδέναι τοῖς
 σαρκικοῖς ἢ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τὸν εἰς αὐτὸν ἐσαυρωμένον, τὸτο ποιεῖται.
 ἔτι δὲ εὐρεθῶσι κατηρτισμένοι τῷ πνεύματι, καὶ καρποφορούντες
 ἐν αὐτῷ, ἐρωτῶντες τὴν κρανίαν σοφίας, μεταδοτέον αὐτοῖς τὸ λόγον,
 ἐπαγγέλλοντο ἀπὸ τοῦ σαρκακώδαι, ἐφ' ὃ ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν
 θεόν. Comment. in Johan. vol. II. p. 9.

* Οὕτω τῶν οἱ μὲν τινες μετέχουσιν αὐτῶν τῶν ἐν ἀρχῇ λόγων
 καὶ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν λόγων, καὶ θεοῦ λόγων, ὡς περ ὡσπερ καὶ ἡσυχίας καὶ
 ἡρεμίας, καὶ εἰ τις ἕτερος τοῦτον ἑαυτὸν παρέστησεν ὡς τὸν λόγον
 αὐτοῦ, ἢ τὸν λόγον γενέσθαι πρὸς αὐτὸν. ἕτερος δὲ οἱ μὴδὲν
 εἰδότες εἴμην Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τὸν ἐσαυρωμένον, τὸν γενομένον
 σαρκὸς λόγον, τὸ πᾶν νομίζοντες εἶναι τὸν λόγον Χριστὸν κατὰ
 σὰρκα μόνον γνωσκάσι. τὸτο δὲ ἐστὶ τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἀπίστων
 καὶ νομιζομένων. Comment. in Johan. vol. II. p. 49.

"true

"true logos of God, which is in the open
"heaven*."

These humble christians of Origen who got no farther than the shadow of the logos, and the *simplices* and *idiotæ* of Tertullian, were probably the *simplices credentium* of Jerom, who, as well as the heretics, he says, "did not understand the scriptures as became their majesty." For had these simple christians, within the pale of the church, inferred from what John says of the logos, and from what Christ says of himself, that he was, personally considered, equal to the father, Jerom would hardly have said that they did not understand the scriptures according to their majesty: for he himself would not pretend to a perfect knowledge of the mystery of the trinity. "For these simple christians, he says, "the earth of the people of God brought forth hay, as for the heretics it brought forth thorns†." For the intelligent, I suppose, it produced richer fruits.

From all these passages, and others quoted before, especially the *major pars credentium* of Ter-

* Τα δε πληθη των πεπιστευκεναι νομιζομενων τη σκια του λογου, & ουχι τω αληθινω λογω θεου, εν τω ανισωτοι κρηνη του χαροντι, μαθητευεται. Comment. in Johan. vol. II. p. 52.

† Quod dicitur super terram populi mei spinæ et sœnum ascendent, referri potest et ad hæreticos, et ad simplices quosque credentium, qui non ita scripturam intelligunt ut illius convenit majestati. Unde singula singulis coaptavimus, ut terra populi dei hæreticis spinas, imperitis quibusque ecclesiæ sœnum afferat. In If. xxxii. 20. Opera, vol. IV. p. 118.

tullian, I cannot help inferring, that the doctrine of Christ being any thing more than a man, who was crucified and rose from the dead (the whole doctrine of the incarnation of the eternal logos, that was in God, and that was God) was considered as a more abstruse and refined doctrine, with which there was no occasion to trouble the common people; and it is evident that this class of christians was much staggered by it, and offended when they did hear of it. This could never have been the case if it had been supposed to be the doctrine of the apostles, and to have been delivered by them as the most essential article of christian faith, in which light it is now represented. Such terms as *scandalizare*, *expavescere*, &c. used by Tertullian, and *ταρασσειν* by Origen, can only apply to the case of some *novel* and *alarming* doctrine, something that men had not been accustomed to. In the language of Origen, it had been the *corporeal* gospel only, and not this *spiritual* and *mysterious* one that they had been taught.

I am, &c.

LETTER

to LETTERS TO THE

LETTER IX

*Of the light in which the Unitarians were considered
in later ages, and of the state of the common people
at all times.*

REV. SIR,

IT appears from what has been advanced in the preceding letters, that, whatever might be the opinion of the more learned christians, and of course that of the *writers*, the bulk of the common people were not brought to a belief, or rather a profession, of the doctrine of the trinity till a pretty late period; and that if they did not of themselves leave the communion of the orthodox, and raised no disturbance in the church, they were connived at. In fact, they were considered by the more learned as simple ignorant people, who knew no better, and who acquiesced in the doctrine of the simple *humanity* of Christ, because they were incapable of comprehending that of his *divinity*, and the sublime doctrine of *three persons in one God*. This must have been the case with the οἱ πολλοί, *the many*, or multitude, of Athanasius.

This writer, considering the violence of his character, speaks of the unitarians with a good deal of tenderness on account of the difficulty of understanding

standing the doctrine of the trinity. In my former letters, I quoted a passage from him, in which he represents them as the *οἱ πολλοί*, *the many*, and persons of a low understanding, but by no means as persons out of the church. Contrasting them with the Gnostics and the Arians, he says, "some persons considering what is human in Christ, seeing him thirsting, labouring and suffering, and degrading him to a mere man, sin indeed greatly; but they may readily obtain forgiveness, if they repent, alledging the weakness of the flesh; and they have the apostle himself administering pardon to them, and as it were holding out his hand to them, while he says, *Truly, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh* *."

According to him many persons within the pale of the church must either have been unitarians, or have believed the doctrine of the trinity without understanding it, which in fact is no belief at all. Being consulted what was to be done with respect to the spread of the doctrine of *Paulus Samosatensis*; after acknowledging that persons of *low understandings* were chiefly infected with it, and quoting what

* Όταν τινες, εἰς τὰ ἀνθρώπινα ἐλήποιντες, ἰδῶσι τὸν κύριον διψῶντα, ἢ κοπιῶντα, ἢ παχύνοντα, καὶ μόνον φλυαρῶσιν ὡς καὶ ἄνθρωπος τὴν σωτηρίαν, ἀμαρτάνουσι μὲν μέγας. δύναται δὲ ὁμοῦς ταχέως μεταγινώσκοντες λαμβάνειν συγγνώμην, ἔχοντες προφασιν τὴν τοῦ σώματος ἀδυναμίαν: ἔχει γὰρ καὶ ἁποστόλος συγγνώμην αὐτοῖς νεμόντα, καὶ οἷον χεῖρα αὐτοῖς ἐν τῷ λέγειν ἐκτείνοντα, ὅτι καὶ ὁμολογούμενός μετὰ ἐστὶ τὸ τῆς εὐσεβείας μυστήριον, θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί. In illud Evangelii Quicumque dixerit, &c. Opera, vol. I. p. 975.

G

Paul

Paul says of the *great mystery of godliness*, *God manifest in the flesh*, he says, "those who understand the subject *accurately* are few, but all pious persons may hold the faith delivered to them*." But what kind of *holding* must it be, when they had no perfect understanding of what they held.

Gregory Nazianzen also represents the common people as excuseable for their errors, and safe from not being disposed to scrutinize into things†.

I have also observed many instances in writers so late as Chrysostom, who notwithstanding the prevalence of a different mode of treating unitarians, use the term *heretics* in its ancient and proper sense, for the Gnostics only. Here I shall content myself with one from Athanasius. He says, "The heretics make to themselves another maker of the universe, besides the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ‡." Indeed Athanasius considered the proper unitarians in a more favourable light than he did either the Gnostics, or the Arians. See Opera, vol. I. p. 975. 977, 978.

* ΟΤΙ ΤΗΝ ΜΕΝ ΑΚΡΙΒΕΙΑΝ ΑΥΤΗΣ ΕΠΙΖΗΤΕΙΝ ΟΛΙΓΩΝ ΕΣΤΙ, ΤΗΝ ΔΕ ΠΙΣΤΙΝ ΚΑΤΕΧΕΙΝ ΑΠΑΝΤΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΠΡΟΣ ΤΟΝ ΘΕΟΝ ΕΥΤΕΙΔΩΝ. De Incarnatione contra P. Samefat. Opera, vol. I. p. 592.

† Τοις μὲν γὰρ τε λανταχα ἀνὴρ συγγιγασκοίμην τεταπαχυσιν, καὶ σώζει πολλὰς τὸ ἀσάτανισον. Oratio xii. Opera, vol. . p. 388.

‡ Οἱ δὲ ἀπὸ τῶν αἰρεσιῶν ἄλλων ἑαυτοῖς ἀναπλαστοὶ δημιουργοὶ τῶν πάντων παρὰ τὸν πατέρα τε κύριε ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστέ. De Incarnatione. Opera, vol. I. p. 55.

Cyril

Cyril of Jerusalem complains of heretics, both unitarians and Arians, in the bosom of the church. "Now," says he, "there is an apostasy; for men have departed from the faith, some confounding the Son with the Father, others daring to say that Christ was created out of nothing. Formerly heretics were open, but now the church is full of concealed heretics*." The more zealous of the orthodox bishops might do something more than complain, but in general it may be presumed that they did not trouble themselves about the matter.

Complaints of the spread of heresy, both that of the unitarians, and that of the Arians, in Asia Minor, in the time of Basil, by himself, and his cotemporaries, are without end. Those opinions prevailed more especially among the *common people*, though many of the clergy were also infected; and what is remarkable, the malcontents complained loudly of his *innovations*, both with respect to ancient doctrines, and ancient practices. For some time Basil, called *the great*, was obliged to give way to the storm, and retire from his diocese, though this, it seems, was a dangerous step; for, according to him, unremitted vigilance

* Νυν δὲ ἐστὶν ἀποστασία: ἀπέστησαν γὰρ οἱ ἄνθρωποι τῆς ὁρθῆς πίστεως, καὶ οἱ μὲν υἱοπατορίαν καταγγέλλουσιν, οἱ δὲ τὸν Χριστὸν ἐκ οὐτῶν εἰς τὸ εἶναι παρὲν χθόνια λέγειν τολμῶσιν, καὶ πρότερον μὲν ἦσαν φανεροὶ αἰρετικοί, νυν δὲ πεπληρωταὶ ἡ ἐκκλησία κεκρυμμένων αἰρετικῶν. Cyrilli. Catech. xv. p. 209.
See also p. 5.

was necessary to guard their flocks from seduction. "If any person," he says, "leave his diocese for the shortest time, he leaves the common people exposed*."

I think we may learn from Facundus, who wrote so late as the reign of Justinian, that in his time many of the common people were well known to consider Christ as a *mere man*, and yet were not disturbed on that account. As the passage in his writings from which I infer this is a pretty remarkable one, I shall cite it at full length. Speaking of the condemnation of Theodorus, in whose favour he is writing, he says, that "in condemning him they condemned all those who thought as he did, even though they afterwards changed their opinion. — What will they do with Martha, and then with Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, who were particularly attached to our Lord while he was upon earth? And yet both of them, first Martha, and then Mary, are said to speak to him thus, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*; who, though they thought that he was the Son of God who was to come into the world, yet would they not have said *if thou hadst been here*, if they had believed him to be God omnipresent. They therefore only thought as Theo-

* Εἰ γὰρ τις καὶ πρὸς τὸ βραχυτάτον τῆς ἐκκλησίας αὐτῆς ἀποταῖν ἐκδοτὲς ἀφήσῃ τῆς λαοῦ τοῖς ἐπιδόξουσι. Basilii Epist. lxx. Opera, vol. III. p. 114.

“dorus is said to have done, and were excommu-
 “nicated along with him; and how many of this
 “kind do we know, by the writings of the apos-
 “tles and evangelists, there were at that time,
 “and how many even now are there still in the
 “common herd of the faithful, who by only par-
 “taking in the holy mysteries, and by a simple
 “observance of the commandments, we see pleas-
 “ing God; when even the apostles themselves,
 “the first teachers, only thought as those whom
 “we see to be included in this condemnation of
 “Theodorus*.”

The case is indeed the same, in a greater or less degree, at all times, and in all churches. Quiet people will generally be indulged in their own way of thinking, and they are only those that disturb others that are themselves disturbed.

* Condemnaverunt omnes ab ipso in quem illum incidisse putant errore conversos. — Ubi quid agent de Martha et Maria, sororibus Lazari, qua familiari devotione ipsi domino dum hic in carne degerit adhæserunt. Et tamen utraque, id est, prius Martha, ac deinde Maria, legitur illi dixisse, Domine si fuisses hic frater meus non fuisset mortuus. Quæ licet crederent quod ipse esset filius Dei qui in mundum venisset, tamen non dicerent *si fuisses hic*, si eum cognoscerent sicut Deum, ubique esse presentem. Eadem ergo sapuerunt quæ dicitur sapuisse Theodorus, et cum Theodoro simul anathematizati sunt. Et quantos vel eo tempore in evangeliiis et apostolicis scriptis tales fuisse cognovimus? Quantos etiam nunc tales in grege fidelium, sola sanctorum mysteriorum participatione, et simplici præceptorum obedientia, placentes Deo vidimus; cum et ipsi primi pastores ejus Apostoli sic aliquando sapuerunt, quos omnes cum Theodoro vidimus in hoc anathemate condemnatos. Pro defensione trium Capitulorum, Lib. X. c. vii. p. 162.

Is it not well known that there are both Arians and Socinians members of the church of England, and even among the clergy themselves; and yet if they can reconcile it to their own minds to keep in communion with a trinitarian church, there are no attempts made to molest them. Zealous as the *heads* of the church are (from the archdeacons to the archbishops) for the purity of its tenets, they think proper to connive at these things, and so they did in an age more zealous than this. The excellent Mr. Firmin was not only an avowed Socinian, and in communion with the church of England, but in habits of intimacy with Tillotson, and some of the most distinguished churchmen of his time.

At present there are Arian and Socinian writers within the pale of your church, and yet I dare say it never occurred to any archdeacon, bishop, or archbishop, that it would be proper to excommunicate any of them for the part they have acted. Such a thing as this might not have passed so easily in the time of Theodosius; but even then I make do doubt but that persons who could content themselves without disturbing others, would not have been molested.

You and I are both agreed that persons who do not *bona fide* hold the acknowledged tenets of any church (I mean such great and distinguished ones as those relating to *the object of worship*) ought to withdraw themselves from it, and not, by continuing in communion with it,
to

to countenance its errors. But how many are there who do not see the thing in the same light, or whose habits and prejudices are such, that they cannot bring themselves to act as we think every principle of *honour*, as well as of *religion* dictates; and yet I cannot agree with you, if you should say that all such persons are hypocrites, and insincere, doing what they themselves know and feel to be wrong. They have excuses which I doubt not satisfy their own minds, though they do not satisfy me. Great allowance, no doubt, is also to be made for the force of habit, and even for a natural timidity. There are many Erasmus's for one Luther, many Dr. Clarkes for one Whiston, a name which, notwithstanding the weakness of his judgment in some things, ought never to be mentioned without respect, on account of his almost singular and unparalleled uprightness.

As to the *common people*, the *idiots* of Tertulian, we generally see that, as they are not innovators in doctrine, they go to public worship where they have been used to do, without any nice discrimination of what is transacted there; and the observation will generally apply to the bulk of the inferior clergy. When Henry VIII. reformed the church of England, how many joined him in it, who would never have declared themselves dissenters from the established church? The church is now trinitarian; but supposing that an Arian or Socinian parliament

(which is a possible case in this inquisitive and fickle age) should change the established religion in that respect, how many do you think of the clergy (excepting those who possess the rank, the knowledge, and the zeal of Archdeacons, &c. and also those whom you would place in the *dregs of methodism*, p. 62.) would become dissenters; especially if, as was often the case in former times, they had no alternative but a prison with a good conscience, or their present emoluments without one. I rather think they would contrive to keep both, and soon make themselves perfectly easy in their new situation.

With respect to the *common people* in general, settled as you may think them to be in the doctrines of the church of England, perpetually hearing of *three persons and one God*, and daily making their responses to *the holy blessed and glorious trinity*; yet could they, without any preparation, or discussion, hear Mr. Lindsey's reformed liturgy read to them by their usual ministers, and no Archdeacon should sound the alarm, but they were to take it for granted that all was done by order of their *superiors*, and therefore *right*, I dare say the peace of few parishes would be much disturbed by it.

These considerations, which are founded on such a knowledge of human nature as we may learn from all history, and our own daily observation, may render it credible, that the majority
of

of the common people, the *idiotæ* of Tertullian, though not the *ideots* of Dr. Horsley, might be unitarians, and yet continue in communion with the church after its forms became trinitarian, especially as they would not become so all at once. In the most ancient liturgies, you know, there were no prayers addressed to Christ; and as the members of christian societies were not required to subscribe to any thing*, there was nothing that they were expected to *bear a part in*, concerning which they might not be able to satisfy themselves.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X.

Of the Quotation from Athanasius.

REV. SIR.

IT is with very little effect, indeed, that you cavil at my quotation from Athanasius, and the defence I made of it. To every impartial reader it discovers how extremely averse the Jews were to the doctrine of the divinity of Christ; and, to borrow a word from

* In the times in which the doctrine of the trinity was most agitated, some of the more zealous bishops proposed the *Nicene creed*, and other tests, to those who were in communion with them; but even then this practice does not appear to have been general.

you

you and Mr. Badcock, to what *management* the apostles were reduced in divulging this offensive doctrine to them. I have nothing to offer in addition to what I said on that subject, except that I have no objection to your rendering *εὐλογητὴ αἰτία*, a *good reason*, instead of a *plausible pretence*; for I doubt not that it appeared a very good reason to Athanasius, who had nothing better to suggest.

Athanasius, however, by no means stands single in his view of the prejudices of the Jews, and of the conduct of the apostles with respect to them. Epiphanius, as quoted above, shews how prevalent the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ was at the time that John wrote. There are also passages in several of the Fathers, and especially a great number in Chrysostom, by which we clearly perceive that their ideas of the conduct of the apostles was precisely the same with that which I have ascribed to Athanasius; and as it is possible that by a different kind of instinct, my *rapid glances* may have discovered more passages of this kind than have occurred to you, in the actual *reading* and *study* of all the authors, I shall here produce one of them from the preface to his Commentaries on the Book of Acts.

After treating pretty largely of the conduct of the apostles with respect to their insisting on the doctrine of the *resurrection* of Christ, rather than that of his *divinity*, immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit, he says, "As to the Jews, who had
" daily

“daily heard, and been taught out of the law, *Hear*
“O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord, and besides
“him there is no other; having seen him (Jesus)
“nailed to a cross, yea having killed and buried
“him themselves, and not having seen him risen
“again, if they had heard that this person was God,
“equal to the Father, would not they have re-
“jected and spurned at it.” I want words in Eng-
 lish to express the force of the Greek, in this place.
 The Latin translator renders it *nonne maxime omnes*
ab his verbis abhorruissent, ac resiliissent, et oblatras-
sunt. “On this account,” he adds “they (the
 “apostles) brought them forwards gently, and by
 “slow degrees, and used great art in condescending
 “to their weakness*.”

In how different a light do Crystostom and you
 represent the same thing. According to you, the
 Jews were always fully persuaded that their Mes-
 siah was to be God, equal to the Father; and there-
 fore, after the apostles had persuaded them that
 Jesus was the Messiah, they had nothing to apprehend
 from their attachment to the doctrine of the

* Πως δε αν Ιουδαιοι οι καθ' εασην ημεραν, μαρτανεντες
 υπο τε νομω, Ακβε Ισραηλ, κυριος ο δεος σα κυριος εις εστιν, κη
 πλην αυτη εκ εστιν αλλος, επι ξυλκ σαυρα ιδοντες προσηλωμενην
 αιχην, μαλλον δε κη σαυρωσαντες κη θαψαντες, κη εδω ανασαντα
 δεασαμινον, ακουοντες οτι δεος εστιν αυτης ελθων, κη τω πατρι
 ισθ, εκ αν μαλιστα παντων απετηνησαν κη απεραγησαν.
 Διατι τελο ηρεμα, κη καλα μικρον, αυτες προσβιβαζεσι, κη
 πολλη μεν κεχηρηται τη της συγκαταβατews οικονομια. In
 Acta Rom. i. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 447.

unity of God, and had no occasion for any *art* or *management* with respect to it. However, their view of things, I doubt not, assisted Athanasius, Chrysostom, and others, who lived nearer to those times, than the present Archdeacon of St. Albans, to account for the great number of unitarians among the early Jewish christians. Nor could they wonder at the same among the Gentiles, considering, as Athanasius does, that they could only learn christianity from the Jews; and it would have answered no end for the apostles to have spoken with caution to the Jews, and with openness to the Gentiles. Besides, according to Chrysostom, the Gentiles were not much better prepared to receive the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, than the Jews themselves.

In the same passage, part of which I have quoted above, after observing that, if the apostles had not conducted themselves in this cautious manner with respect to the Jews, their whole doctrine would have appeared incredible to them, he adds, “and at Athens Paul calls him (Jesus) simply a *man*, and nothing farther, and for a good reason. For if, when they had heard Christ himself speaking of his equality to the Father, they would on that account have often stoned him, and called him a blasphemer; they would hardly, therefore, have received this doctrine from fishermen, especially after speaking of him as crucified. And why do I speak of the Jews, when at that time, even the disciples of Christ himself were often disturbed, and scandalized at him, when they heard sublime doc-
trines;

"trines ; on which account he said, I have many
 "things to say to you, but ye are not yet able to
 "bear them. And if they could not bear these
 "things who had lived so long with him, and had
 "received so many mysteries, and seen so many
 "miracles, how could men from their altars, and
 "idols, and sacrifices, and cats, and crocodiles ;
 "for such was the worship of the heathens ! But
 "being first brought off from these abominations,
 "they would readily receive their discourse con-
 "cerning more sublime doctrines*."

But we find no trace of either Jews or Gentiles
 having received these sublime doctrines that Chry-
 sostom alludes to in the age of the apostles. Nay
 he himself represents the apostle Paul as obliged to
 use the same caution with respect to the Jews, when
 he wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, which was so
 late as A. D. 62, about two years before his death.

* Εν δε Αθηναῖς ἡ ἀνθρωπὸν αὐτὸν ἀπλῶς καλεῖ ο Παιλῶ,
 ὡς πλέον εἰπὼν. εἰκοτὼς. εἰ γὰρ αὐτὸν τὸν χριστὸν διαλεγό-
 μενον περὶ τῆς εἰς τὸν πατεράϊσότητος, λιθάσαι πολλὰς ἐπι-
 χεῖρησαν, ἡ βλασφημοὶ δια τὸ ἐκαλεῖν, ὅλη γὰρ παρὰ τῶν
 αἰσίων τὸν λόγον ἐδέξαντο, ἡ τὸ τὸν σαυρον προχωρή-
 σαντες. Καὶ τί δεῖ λεγέιν τῆς Ἰουδαίας ; οὔτε γὰρ αὐτοὶ τότε
 πολλὰς οἱ μαθηταὶ τῶν υφ' ἡμετέρων ἀκούοντες ἐδορυβέντε ἡ
 ἐκκαταλύοντο. δια τὸ ἡ ἐλεγε πολλὰ ἔχω λεγέιν ὑμῖν
 ἀλλ' οὐ δύνασθε βασάζειν αὐτῇ. εἰ δὲ οἱ ἐκείνοι οὐκ ἐδύναντο οἱ
 συγγενόμενοι χρόνον τούτων, ἡ τούτων κοινοῦσαντες ἀπορ-
 ρητῶν, ἡ τούτων θεασάμενοι θαύματα, πῶς ἀνθρώποι ἀπο-
 βαινον, ἡ εἰδῶλον, ἡ θυσίαν, ἡ αἰθερῶν, ἡ κροκοδείλων,
 τούτων γὰρ ἡ τῶν ἐλλήνων σεβασμάτων : ἡ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν
 κακῶν τότε πρῶτον ἀποσταθέντες, ἀδρῶν τῆς υφ' ἡμετέρων
 δογμάτων ἐδέξαντο λόγους. Ibid.

And if the body of the Jewish christians were at that time unitarians, can it be thought probable that they became trinitarians soon afterwards? If the apostles themselves had not succeeded in this business, which required equal address and authority, who else can be supposed to have done it?

Chrysostom represents the apostle as beginning his epistle to the Hebrews with saying, that "it was *God* who spake by the prophets, and by his son, and not that *Christ* himself had spoken by them, because their minds were weak, and they were not able to bear the doctrine concerning *Christ*." He even says that "when he there speaks of Christ as above the angels, he still spoke of his humanity." See," says he, "his great caution, *ὅρα τὴν συνείσιν τὴν πολλήν*, ib. p. 1755, the very expression used by Athanasius on a similar occasion, and which you think I have not rendered rightly, and have mistaken the sense of the passage,

* Καὶ θεὰ τι συνετάς αὐτο εἰρηκεῖ. ἔγχαρ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ἐλάλησεν καὶ τοῦτο αὐτὸς ἢ ὁ λαλῆσας. ἀλλ' ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀδύνατοι αὐτῶν ἦσαν αἱ ψυχὰς, καὶ ἐδέχθη ἀκεῖν ἡδυνάτο τοῦ περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, φησὶν ὁ θεὸς δι' αὐτοῦ ἐλάλησεν. In Heb. cap. i. Opera, vol. X. p. 1756. i. e. "See how prudently he spoke: for he said God spake though it was himself that spake; but because their minds were weak and they were not able to bear the things concerning Christ, he says *God spake by him*." N. B. The (ε) in the second clause of this passage must be inserted by mistake for (καὶ) or some other particle, as it contradicts what is said in the close of the sentence, and the obvious sense of the whole.

though

though Beaufobre, the popish translator, and I shall now add Dr. Lardner, all understood it as I do.

It was the general opinion of the Fathers, as may be learned from Epiphanius and Jerom, quoted above, that it was John who first preached the doctrine of the divinity of Christ explicitly, and that when Matthew, Mark, and Luke, wrote their gospels, the christians in general, but more especially the Jews among them, were not prepared to receive a doctrine of such sublimity.

Chrysostom represents all the preceding writers of the New Testament as "children, who heard, "but did not understand things, and who were "busy about cheese-cakes and childish sports* ; "but John, he says, taught what the angels themselves did not know before he declared it † ;" and he represents them as his most attentive auditors. Opera, vol. viii. p. 2. "Leaving the "Father," he says, p. 11, "he [John] discoursed "concerning the son; because the Father was "known to all, if not as a Father, yet as God, "but the unbegotten was unknown ‡."

Observing

* Οἱ γὰρ ἄλλοι ἀπ᾿ ἡλικίας, καθάπερ τὰ παῖδια τὰ μικρά, ἀκούσι μὲν, οὐκ ἴσασι δὲ ἀπερακούσιν; ἀλλὰ περὶ πλακύντας ἐπιοῦνται, καὶ ἀδύρμαλα παῖδινα. In Johan. i. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 2.

† Ἀ μὴ δὲ ἀγγέλοι πρὶν ἢ τὸν γενέσθαι ἠδείσαν. μεθ' ἡμῶν γὰρ διη καὶ υἱοὶ διὰ τῆς Ἰωάννου φωνῆς καὶ δι' ἡμῶν ἑμάθον ὥστε ἐγνώμεν. In Johan. i. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 2.

‡ Τὶ δὴ πόλ' ἐν τῷ πατρὶ ἀφείς, περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ διαλεγόμεναι; οἱ ἐκείνοι μὲν δηλοῦν ἀπ᾿ ὅλων ἡν, εἰ καὶ μὴ ὡς πατὴρ, ἀλλ' ὡς θεός,

Observing that *in the beginning was the logos*, he says, "This was not preached immediately, "for the world could not bear it. The evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John" (this last is inserted by some mistake) "when they began the preaching, spake at a distance, and "not immediately what became his dignity, but "what was convenient for their hearers *."

Of the three first evangelists, he says, that "they all treated of the fleshly dispensation, and "silently, by his miracles, indicated his dignity. "The dignity of the logos of God was hid, the "arrows against the heretics were concealed, and "the fortification to defend the right faith was "not raised by the pious preaching. John, therefore, the son of thunder, being the last, advanced to the doctrine of the logos," or the divinity of Christ †.

Austin

δεσ, ο δε μονογενης υγιος υιο. In Johan. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 11.

* Εν αρχη ο λογος. Ουκ ευδως τοσο εκηρυχθη. εγωρ εχωρε ο κοσμος. Μακραν ημιν οι ευαγγελισται Μαρθαριος Μαρκος, Λυκας, κ' Ιωαννης, ος ηξαισιν τε κηρυγμασιν εκ ευδως ελαλησαν τα περιουσια τη αξια, αλλα τα αρμοζουσατοις ακρωμειτοις. De Sigillis. Opera, vol. VI. p. 171.

† Παντες εν εχωρησαν εις την της σαρκος οικονομιας, κ' ηρεμα πως, δια των θαυμασιων, εγνωριζον την αξιαν. Εκρυπτετο δε επι του θεου λογου αξιωμα. Εκρυπτετο δε τα κατὰ των αιρετικων βελη, κ' το της ορθης δοξης επιτειχισμα υδαποτε το κηρυγματι της ευσεβειας εχηγερτο. Ιωαννης τοιουν, ο υιος της τροτης, τελευταιος, περιηλθεν επι την θεολογαν. Ib. p. 173. N. B. The sense of the passage absolutely

Austin writes to the same purpose, "And if
"there be any other things which, to those who
"rightly understand them, intimate the divinity
"of Christ, in which he is equal to the Father,
"John almost alone has given them in his
"gospel*."

Theodoret observes, that in the genealogy of Christ
given by Matthew, this writer did not add *according
to the flesh*, "because the men of that time would
"not bear it," evidently meaning, that they would
thereby have been led into a suspicion that, in the
idea of the writer, he had some higher origin, and
would have been offended at it; but the apostle
Paul, he says, could not avoid that expression in his
Epistle to the Romans. He adds, that "before
"his death, not only to the other Jews, but to the
"apostles themselves, he did not appear as a God,
"nor did his miracles lead them to form that opi-
"nion of him†." This writer also says that the

absolutely requires *expresso* and not *expresse* in both
the clauses, and in the latter it is so rendered by the Latin
translator, though not in the former. The observation, that
the first verses in the gospel of John are a refutation of all
heresies is common with the Fathers. No person, except
one who is pretty well conversant with them, can imagine
how often those verses occur in their writings.

* Et si qua alia sunt, quæ Christi divinitatem, in qua æqualis
est patri, recte intelligentibus intiment, penè solus Joannes in
evangelio suo posuit. Austin de Consensu Evangelistarum,
Opera, vol. iv. p. 374.

† Πρὸ μὲν τοῦ εὐαγγε-
λίου τοῦ μαρκοῦ, ὁ θεὸς ἦν ὁ υἱος τοῦ θεοῦ
καὶ ὁ υἱος τοῦ υἱοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ ἀποστόλοι
καὶ οἱ ἄλλοι Ἰουδαῖοι, οὐκ ἔδειξον αὐτῷ
τὴν ἀληθινὴν θεοσύνην.

apostle Paul, in mentioning the subjection of Christ to the Father, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, "spake of him more lowly than was necessary, on account of their weakness." 1 Cor. xv. Opera, vol. III. p. 201.

And yet you, Sir, who have, no doubt read, considered, and re-considered, all these passages, and many more than I can produce to the same purpose, can say, p. 93. "The desire of instructing the Jews, not the fear of offending them, was the motive with the apostles for propounding first what was the easiest to be understood, and the most likely to be admitted;" and even add, you cannot read without astonishment, that I should suppose that Athanasius meant to intimate that they were afraid of giving offence to the Jews.

When we consider how late the three first gospels were written, the last of them not long before that of John, which was near, if not after the destruction of Jerusalem, and that, in the opinion of these writers above mentioned, all this caution and reserve had been necessary on the part of the christian teachers, how is it possible, that, in their idea, the christian church in general should have been well established in the belief of our Lord's divinity? It could only have been great and open zeal on the part of the apostles, and not the *caution* and *management* which these writers ascribe to them, that could have effectually

δεδοτα — δεδοτα τα δαυματα αυτου προς ταυτην ενδοξην ταυτην
δεξαι. In Rom. Lib. iv. Opera, vol. III. p. 11.

taught

taught a doctrine, which, according to them, they were ill prepared to receive. And the history of both Peter and Paul sufficiently prove, that the influence of mere apostolical authority was not so great at that time as many persons now take it to have been. Whatever powers they had, they were not considered as *lords over the faith of christians*.

The christians of that age required something more than the private opinion of an apostle. They required some supernatural evidence that his doctrine was from God; and we have no account of the apostles proposing to them this article of faith, and alledging any such evidence for it. Chrysostom says, that "if the Jews were so much offended at having a new law superadded to their former, how much more would they have been offended if Christ had taught his own divinity." May it not be supposed, therefore, that they would have required as particular evidence of a divine revelation in the one case as in the other? And what remarkably strong evidence was necessary to convince them that the obligation of their law did not extend to the Gentiles? Would they, therefore, have received what Chrysostom considered as the more offensive doctrine of the two, without any pretence to a particular revelation on the subject?

It may be said that all the caution of which we have been speaking was necessary with respect to the *unbelieving Jews only*, into whose hands these gospels, and the other writings of the New Testament,

ment might fall. But how impossible must it have been to conceal from the unbelieving Jews the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, if it had been a favourite article with the *believing Jews*? If this had been the case, it could not but have been known to all the world; and therefore all the offence that it could have given would have been unavoidable. So that this supposed caution of the evangelists, &c. would have come too late, and would have answered no purpose whatever.

This caution, therefore, must necessarily have respected those persons into whose hands the gospels, &c. were most likely to come, and who would give the most attention to them; and these were certainly the believing Jews, and the christian world at large, and not unbelievers of any nation. And we are authorized to conclude that, in the opinion of the writers who have spoke of it, of whatever weight that opinion may be, this caution in divulging the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was necessary with respect to the great body of christians themselves, and especially the Jewish christians. Consequently, they must have supposed that at the time of these publications, which was about A.D. 64, the doctrine of the divinity of Christ was not generally held by christians, and that there would have been danger of giving them great offence if it had been plainly proposed to them by the apostles themselves. At this time, therefore, it may be inferred, that in the opinion of these writers, the christian church was principally unitarian, believing only

the simple humanity of Christ, and knowing nothing of his divinity or pre-existence.

From the acknowledgment which these orthodox fathers could not help virtually making (for certainly they would not do it unnecessarily any more than yourself) that there were great numbers of proper unitarians in the age of the apostles; it seems not unreasonable to conclude, that there were great numbers of them in the age immediately following, and in their own; and their knowledge of this might be an additional reason for the opinion that they appear to have formed of that prevalence in the apostolic age. Would those fathers have granted to their enemies spontaneously, and contrary to truth, that the Jews were strongly prepossessed against the doctrine of the divinity of Christ, and that the unitarians were a formidable body of christians while the apostles were living, if it had been in their power to have denied the facts? The consequence of making these acknowledgments is but too obvious, and must have appeared so to them, as well as it now does to you, which makes you so unwilling to make it after them.

You say that the unitarian Jews mentioned by Athanasius were not christians, and that the Gentiles to whom they taught the doctrine of the humanity of the Messiah were mere heathen Greeks. "Have you forgotten, Sir," you say,

p. 97. "have you never known, or would you
"deny, what is not denied by candid infidels,
"that the expectation of a great deliverer, or be-
"nefactor of mankind, was universal even in the
"Gentile world, about the time of our Lord's ap-
"pearance." This, however, I do very much
question, and I should be glad to know the names
of the candid infidels who have acknowledged it.

An expectation of a Messiah certainly existed
among the Jews, and of course among their pro-
felites; but if any such idea had been universal
among the Gentiles, so as to interest them in
discussions about the nature of this great deli-
verer, as whether he was to be God or man, &c.
we should certainly have perceived some traces
of it in their writings. It might have been ex-
pected that, on account both of the interesting na-
ture, and of the obscurity, of the subject, there
would have been different opinions about it,
that it would have been a common topic in their
philosophical schools; and that their historians
would have given some account of the origin and
foundation of this universal opinion.

You will produce, I suppose, Virgil's sixth
eclogue. But, Sir, can you believe that even
Virgil himself really expected any such person as
he describes? The use that the poets might
make of a vague report of a prophecy, brought
probably from the east, and ultimately from the
the

the Jewish scriptures (but seriously believed by no person that we know of) merely to embellish a poem, is one thing; but the actual and universal expectation of such a person, is another.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R X I.

*Of the Time when Christ began to be considered as God,
and the Opinion of the ancient and modern Jews
with respect to the Messiah,*

REV. SIR,

I Took the liberty to request that you would endeavour to fix the time when the apostles and primitive christians began to consider Christ as God, or even the maker of the world under God; taking it for granted, that at the first they supposed him to be a mere man. This I thought no person living would have denied. That the Jews expected only a man for their Messiah is clearly supposed by Justin Martyr, and all the christian fathers. The Jews of their time were perpetually objecting to the christian doctrine on account of their making Christ to be a God, and I have no doubt, but that the expectation of the

Jews at this day is the same with that of their ancestors two thousand years ago.

You, Sir, have, however, ventured to deny all this. Speaking of the apostles, you say, p. 107, that "from their first acknowledgment of our Lord as the Messiah, they equally acknowledged his divinity. The Jews," you say, p. 109. "in Christ's days had notions of a trinity in the divine nature. They expected the second person, whom they called the Logos, to come as the Messiah*. For the proof of these assertions I refer you to the work of the learned Dr. Peter Allix, entitled *The Judgment of the ancient Jewish Church against the Unitarians*; a work which it is to be hoped, Sir, you will carefully look through before you send abroad your intended *View of the doctrine of the first ages concerning Christ*."

When my stock of amusement from the writings of bishop Bull is exhausted, which is by no

* On this subject the opinion of the Fathers is unanimous, and against Dr. Horsley. They say indeed that the doctrine of the trinity may be proved from the Old Testament, but that it was delivered so obscurely, on account of the proneness of the Jews to idolatry, that they did not understand it. Theodoret says, Επειδὴ γὰρ ἑβραῖοι ἑρπάζοντο, οὐ μόνον τὴν εἰσόδον τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ δι' αὐτοῦ προσεδοκῆναι. i. e. "The Jews had been accustomed to worship the Father only, and for that reason the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews was obliged to say, *By him let us offer sacrifices to God continually*." In. Heb. Opera, vol. III. p. 461.

means

means the case at present, I may perhaps throw away a few shillings on this Dr. Allix*. In the mean time, without entering into a large discussion on the subject, I shall only ask you a question or two relating to it, and you may answer me out of Dr. Allix if you please. Inform me then, if you can, how our Saviour could possibly, on your idea, have puzzled the Jewish doctors, as he did, reducing them to absolute silence, by asking them how David could call the Messiah his Lord, when he was his son, or descendant. For if they had themselves been fully persuaded, as you suppose, that the Messiah, though carnally descended from David, was in fact the maker and the God of David, and of them all, a very satisfactory answer was pretty obvious. Or without asking any other question of my own, what say you to Facundus, quoted above, who says that "Martha and Mary would never have said to Christ *if thou hadst been here*, had they thought him to be God omnipresent." He adds, "neither would Philip have said to him *Shew us the Father*, if he had entertained any such idea of him."

Facundus also says that the Jews always had expected, and in his time did expect, a mere man for their Messiah. "They did not know," he says, "that Christ, the Son of God, was God,

* Some account of Dr. Allix's opinion, and also of the confutation of it by Prideaux and Capellus, may be seen in *Mr. Lindsey's Apology*, p. 88. Note.

"but

“but they thought that Christ would be a mere
 “man, which any one may perceive that the
 “Jews at this time also think*.”

I am willing, however, to consider a few of the things which you have advanced, in order to give some degree of plausibility to this strange hypothesis. “So far,” you say, p. 107. “as they
 “(the apostles) believed in Jesus as the Messiah,
 “in the same degree they understood and acknowledged his divinity. The proof which I
 “have to produce of this from holy writ consists
 “of too many particulars to be distinctly enumerated in the course of our present correspondence. I shall mention two, which to any but
 “a decided unitarian will be very striking. Nathaniel’s first profession, and Peter’s consternation at the miraculous draught of fishes. It
 “was in Nathaniel’s very first interview with our Lord that he exclaimed *Rabbi, thou art the Son
 “of God! thou art the king of Israel*; and this declaration was drawn from Nathaniel by some
 “particulars in our Lord’s discourse, which he seems to have interpreted as indications of omniscience. When Simon Peter saw the number of fishes taken at a single draught, when
 “the net was cast at our Lord’s command, after
 “a night of fruitless toil, he fell down at the

* Sed non propterea Christum dei filium, deum sciebant; hominem autem purum arbitrati sunt Christum.—Quod etiam hunc putantes Judæos quilibet videbit. Lib. IX. cap. iii. p. 139.

“knees of Jesus, saying, Depart from me, for I
“am a sinful man, O Lord. Peter’s consterna-
“tion was evidently of the same sort of which we
“read in the worthies of earlier ages, upon any
“extraordinary appearance of the light of the
“Sheclinah, which was founded on a notion that
“a sinful mortal might not see God and live.”

With respect to Nathaniel’s calling Jesus the
Son of God, this phrase was, in the mouth of a
Jew, synonymous to the *Messiah*, or *Son of David*,
and it is fully explained by the subsequent expres-
sion of Nathaniel himself, viz. *King of Israel*, and
therefore, the Jewish doctors, expecting nothing
more in their Messiah than a glorious *King of*
Israel, such as David had been, could not give any
satisfactory reason why David should call him *Lord*,
having no notion of his spiritual kingdom, extend-
ing to all mankind. If the mere appellation *Son*
of God, implies *equality with God*, Adam must have
been a God, for he is called the Son of God, Luke
iii. 38. Solomon also must have been God; and
so must all christians, for they are called *Sons of God*.
1 John iii. 2. John i. 12. Rom. viii. 14. Phil.
ii. 15.

As you are so intimately acquainted with the Fa-
thers, you must have known the construction that
Chrysostom puts upon the language of Nathaniel;
and as he was unquestionably orthodox, I should
have thought that it might have had some weight
with you. He says, that “in this speech Nathaniel
“confessed

" confessed Christ as a man, as appears by his addressing, *Thou art the King of Israel.*" In John, Opera, vol. VIII. p. 106.

As to what you call *omniscience*, you will hardly say it was a greater degree of knowledge than it is in the power of God to impart to a man. After our Saviour had performed what you, I suppose, will call an act of *omnipotence*, all the conclusion that the spectators drew from it was, that *God had given such power unto men*. Matt. ix. 8. They did not infer from it that he himself was God, or pretended to be God; and yet they probably thought that he was the Messiah.

As to the consternation of Peter, I should imagine that by the same mode of interpretation you might conclude that the widow of Zarephath took Elijah to be a God; for on the death of her son, she said, 1 Kings xvii. 18. *What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God, art thou come to me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?* Pray, Sir, why might not the exclamation of Peter be considered as being of the same nature with that of this woman? The language is very similar, and I will not answer for it, but that you, not being a decided unitarian, may really be of opinion, that she took the prophet to be God incarnate.

Your proof of the doctrine of the trinity, from a verse in the first sermon of Peter on the day of Pentecost, is particularly curious. It is as follows:

Acts

Acts ii. 33. *Jesus being by the right-hand of God, exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the holy ghost, has shed forth this, &c.* "I shall maintain," you say, p. 101. "that the three persons are distinctly mentioned, in a manner which implies the divinity of each." Well may you say, p. 102. that you shall "argue thus for the edification of your own flock, but with little hope of my conviction, from Peter's first sermon."

Indeed, Sir, I see nothing in this passage but as perfect a dependence of Christ upon God as any man can have. Why should Christ receive the Holy Spirit from the Father, according to a preceding promise, if he had been as much in the power of the Son as of the Father? And why must the Holy Spirit be so much at the absolute disposal of either of them, if he was God in his own right, and of course independent, as much as the Father himself?

The Father, you say, "is distinguished from the Son by not being called God in this place. Paternity is the property that distinguishes the person. But from whom is this first principle distinguished? From his creatures? From them he were more significantly distinguished by the name of God." But, Sir, to adopt your own language, have you forgot, or did you never learn, that we, who are mere mortal men, are taught to address God by the appellation of *Father*, as well as that Christ himself prayed to God by the same title? What weight then is there in the argument that you draw from

from this circumstance? Indeed, Sir, you must be happy in a very tractable flock, if such provision as this will satisfy them. You would make a sad exchange of your flock for mine. If such arguments do not of themselves expose a cause, I do not know what can do it. It is well for your cause that it has other supports besides *arguments*.

Considering the case of Stephen, which is your capital argument for the worship of Jesus Christ, you say, p. 102. "What could be the blasphemy against God" (with which he was charged) "what was there in the doctrine of the apostles which could be interpreted as blasphemy against God, except it was this, that they ascribed divinity to one who had suffered publicly as a malefactor?" You therefore say, "I shall always insist that the blessed Stephen died a martyr to the deity of Christ." As you have formed this resolution, it would be presumption in me to imagine that I could change it, and perhaps all your opinions are as fixed as the laws of the Medes and Persians. Otherwise I might suggest that to a Jew, blasphemy against Moses, by whom God spake, would naturally be considered as blasphemy against the God by whom he spake; on the same principle as our Saviour says, Matt. x. 40. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.*

Besides, we are expressly told what was the *blasphemy* with which Stephen was charged, Acts vi.

11. viz. *against Moses and against God, against this holy place and the law*; and this is fully explained as follows, v. 14. *For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and change the customs which Moses delivered us.* This was the whole of the accusation, very clearly stated, and where do you find any thing said concerning the deity of Christ.

I shall consider another of your curious arguments. You say, p. 101. "I shall particularly de-
"fire them" (i. e. your gentle flock above mentioned) "to remark, that it is said of our Lord
"Jesus, that it was not possible that he should be
"holden of death. The expression's clearly im-
"ply a *physical impossibility*." But as we read that
it is impossible for God to lie, it may be said that as
God had foretold the resurrection of Christ, it
was impossible but that it must take place. As
to a proper *natural impossibility*, the fact is clearly
against you; for if it had been naturally impos-
sible for him to be *holden of death*, it must cer-
tainly have been naturally impossible for him
to have died at all; and if death could hold him
three days, it might for any thing which appears
in nature, have held him *for ever*, if the divine
power, a power foreign to himself, had not in-
terposed. Accordingly we read, not that he
raised himself, but that *God raised him from the
dead*. Use, no doubt, will reconcile the minds
of men to strange conceptions of things, and
strange language; or I should wonder that you
should

should not be shocked at the idea of *God's dying*. For when you speak of the natural impossibility of Christ's being holden of death, you must certainly have an idea of something more than the death of *his body*.

You, Sir, suppose that our Lord's disciples might have conversed with him as familiarly as they did, and have taken the liberties with him which they sometimes did (as when Peter rebuked him for complaining of being touched in a croud, &c. &c.) and yet have considered him as their God and maker. You say, p. 143. "the most that could be inferred, were the assumption true, would be something strange in their conduct, and even this might be a hasty inference. The singularity of their conduct might disappear if the accounts they had left of our Lord's life on earth, and of their attendance upon him, were more circumstantial. But the truth is, that the foundations of this argument are unsound." After mentioning instances in which you think they invoked him as a deity, you say, "If the angels Michael or Gabriel should come and live among us in the manner which you suppose, I think we should soon lose our habitual recollection of their angelic nature. It would be only occasionally awakened by extraordinary incidents. This, at least, would be the case if they mixed with us upon an *even footing*, without assuming any badges of distinction, wearing a common garb, partaking

" of

"of our lodging, and of our board, suffering in
 "the same degree with ourselves from hunger
 "and fatigue, and seeking the same refreshments.
 "The wonder would be if angels, in this disguise,
 "met with any other respect than that which dig-
 "nity of character commands, and something of
 "occasional homage when their miraculous help
 "was needed. This was the respect which our
 "Lord met with from his followers."

To this, I can only say, that I am really
 astonished how you can entertain the idea of any
 number of persons living on this *even footing*,
 as you call it, with a being whom they actually
 believed to be the maker of themselves, and of
 all things, even the eternal God himself. Cer-
 tainly, Sir, you never attempted to realize the
 the idea, or even thought of putting yourself in
 their place, so as to have imagined yourself in-
 troduced into the actual presence of your maker,
 in the form of man, or any other form whatever.
 You must have been overwhelmed with the very
 thought of it; or if *you* should have had the
 courage, and unparalleled self possession, to bear
 such a thing, must there not have been numbers
 who would have been filled with consternation at
 the very idea, or the mere *suspicion*, of the per-
 son they were speaking to being really God.
 And yet we perceive no trace of any such con-
 sternation and alarm in the gospel history, no
 mark of astonishment in the disciples of our
 Lord in consequence of the belief of it, and no
 marks

marks of indignation or exclamation of blasphemy, &c. against those who disbelieved it.

I am surprized to find how very differently you think from your *holy father* Athanasius on this subject. He says, "I will venture to say, that the blessed disciples themselves, had no perfect persuasion concerning his divinity, till the descent of the spirit at Pentecost*."

Chrysostom frequently observes that Christ only intimated his divinity obscurely, and left the full discovery of it to his apostles. Thus he says, that "he himself never said plainly that he made the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all things visible and invisible†. And why," says he, "do you wonder that others should have said greater things of him than he has said of himself, when he explained many things by actions, but never clearly in words. That he made *man*, he shewed clearly enough, as by the blind man; but when he was discoursing about the formation of the first man, he did not say *I made them*, but *he that made them*, made them, male and female. And that he made the world he signified by the

* Τολμῶ γὰρ λεγῖν ὅτι καὶ αὐτοὶ οἱ μακάριοι αὐτὴ μαθήσαι τὸ τελειὸν περὶ τῆς αὐτῆς θεότητος εἶχον φρονίμα, ὡς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον αὐτοῖς τὴν πεντακοστὴν ἐπεφοίτησεν. De Communi Essentia. Opera, vol. I. p. 237.

† Ὅτι ἔφασκεν, καὶ γῆν, καὶ θάλασσαν, αὐτὸς ἐποίησε, καὶ τὰ ὑπομίνα, καὶ τὰ ἀόρατα πάντα, αὐτὸς μὲν ὕδατι σαφῶς ἐφηνάκεν. In Matt. v. Opera, vol. VII. p. 154.

"fishes,

"fishes, by the wine, by the loaves, &c.—but
"never clearly in words*." He even says, "it was
"more necessary to be concealed from his disciples,
"because they would immediately have told every
"thing through an excess of joy †."

"Christ," he says, "did not reveal his divinity
"immediately; but was first thought to be a pro-
"phet, and the Christ, simply a man, and it after-
"wards appeared by his works, and his sayings,
"what he really was ‡."

There is one important circumstance relating to
this subject, of which you have taken no notice at
all, which is this; If the apostles had really preached
the doctrine of the divinity of Christ from the first,

* Καὶ τι θαυμάζεις εἰ ἑτέροι μείζονα περὶ αὐτοῦ εἰρηκασιν
ἐν αὐτῷ· εἰρηκεν· ὅτε γὰρ πολλὰ διὰ τῶν πραγμάτων ἐπί-
δεικνυμεν· διὰ τῶν ρημάτων σαφὲς ἐκ ἐλεγγος· ὅτι γὰρ τὸν
ἀνθρώπον αὐτὸν ἐποίησεν ἐδείξαι σαφὲς καὶ διὰ τῆς τυφλῆς· ἡμεῖς
δὲ περὶ τῆς ἐν ἀρχῇ πλάσεως ὁ λόγος ἦν αὐτῷ ἐκείνῳ ὅτι ἔγωγε
ἐποίησα· ἀλλ' ὁ ποιητὴς ἀρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτὸν. Πάλιν
ὅτι τὸν κόσμον ἐδημιούργησεν καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ διὰ τῶν ἰχθύων
διὰ τῆς οἰκῆς διὰ τῶν ἀρτῶν——ρημασι εὐδαίμων τὸτο σαφὲς
εἰπεν. In Matt. v. Opera, Vol. VII. p. 154.

† Ἐδὲι γὰρ τῶς λαοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ μάλιστα ἐπὶ τῶν μαθητῶν.
καὶ γὰρ ἐκ πολλῆς ὑπόψεως πάντα ἐκπύρξατο. In Matt. cap. viii.
Opera, vol. VII. p. 274.

‡ Οὐ γὰρ εὐδαίμων ἡμῖν αὐτὴ τὴν θεότητα ἐξεκαλύπτει,
ἀλλὰ πρῶτον μὲν ἐνομίζετο εἶναι προφήτης, καὶ Χριστός, ἀπλῶς
ἀνθρώπος, ὑστερον δὲ ἔφανη, διὰ τῶν ἔργων καὶ τῶν ρημάτων,
τὸτο ὅτι ἦν. In Johan. Hom. ii. Opera, vol. VIII. p. 20.

and consequently it had always been the belief of the christian church, the unbelieving Jews must have heard of it. Would they not, therefore, have objected to it as loudly as they did in the times of the christian Fathers, and as they do at this day? How is it then, that neither in the Acts of the Apostles, nor in any of the epistles, we find the least trace of any such objection, the least notice of it, or the most distant reference to it, by those who were concerned to answer it. The most probable conclusion from this fact is, that no such offence had been given to the Jews, the apostles not having preached any such doctrine.

With respect to the time when our Saviour's disciples began to consider him as God, you say, p. 99. that I am the person most concerned to find the solution. I told you in my former letters, that I had solved the difficulty to my own perfect satisfaction in my *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*; where I shewed by what steps the idea of the divinity of Christ was introduced. I did it upon my own hypothesis, of its not being an original doctrine, but a corruption of christianity; and I challenged you to give as probable an account of its introduction, on the idea of its being no corruption, but a genuine doctrine, revealed at some time or other by Christ to the apostles, and by the apostles to the body of christians. But according to you, it required no revelation at all. The whole Jewish nation were prepared

prepared to receive their Messiah as their God, and immediately to worship him accordingly.

I have no doubt, however, but that the Jews in our Saviour's time, expected a man in the character of the Messiah. Mary, his mother, evidently expected that he would even be born in the usual way, of two human parents; for when the angel informed her, that she should *conceive and bring forth a son*, who should be called the *son of the highest*, to whom God would give the *throne of his father David*, she replied, Luke i. 34. *How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?* The apostles evidently appear to me to have considered him as no other than a man, and they taught no other doctrine after our Saviour's death. We perceive no trace of it in the book of Acts; and Athanasius, Chrysostom, and others of the Fathers, only pretend that they taught it with *caution*, so as not to give much alarm, till John published it in his gospel.

Upon the whole, it appears, that the Jews who led the Gentiles into the belief of the doctrine of the simple humanity of Christ were, according to Athanasius, christian Jews, and that their proselytes were christian Gentiles. It is perfectly ridiculous to suppose that the question could be interesting to any others. It also must have been the certain knowledge of great bodies of unitarians, Jews and Gentiles, in the earliest times, that led these Fathers to this hypothesis, to account

for the fact. But that the great body of Jewish christians should be unitarians in the time of the apostles without their having learned that doctrine from the apostles, is a thing that I cannot conceive. Moreover, it does not appear that the apostles took any umbrage at the prevailing doctrine, but connived at it; and all the indignation they expressed against *any* opinions, was against those of the Judaizing teachers and the Gnostics.

If the apostles did themselves really believe the doctrine of the trinity, they must, at least, have had no high idea of its *importance*, or they could never have been such tame spectators of the spread of the unitarian doctrine among their countrymen, and from them, according to Athanasius, among the Gentiles. How would Bishop Bull and the Archdeacon of St. Albans have written, if they had been in the situation in which Epiphanius and all the Fathers place the apostle John when he wrote his epistle? Would they have contented themselves with condemning the dangerous tenet of the unitarians in no more than one clause of a single sentence, which likewise contains the condemnation of the Gnostics? Would they not have thought the unitarian the more dangerous heresy of the two? and therefore have bent their chief force against it?

It is remarkable, however, and really curious, that before the unitarians were considered as heretics,

retics, we find a very different account of the reasons that induced John to write both his epistles and his gospel; Ignatius says it was solely with a view to the Gnostics, and so does Irenæus, again and again. This, therefore, was the more ancient opinion on the subject; and I doubt not, the true one. And it was not till long after this (Tertullian, I believe, is the first in whom it occurs) that it was imagined that the apostle had any view to the unitarians in any of his writings. This is a circumstance that well deserves to be attended to.

You imagine, Sir, what appears very extraordinary, indeed, to me, that the Jews will be easily reconciled to the doctrine of the trinity, and will even more readily embrace christianity on the trinitarian, than on the unitarian principle. "For the Jews," you say, p. 151. "whenever they begin to open their eyes to the evidences of our Saviour's mission, they will still be apt to consider the New Testament in connexion with the Old. They will look for an agreement in principle, at least, between the gospel and the law. When they accept the christian doctrine, it will be as a later and a fuller discovery. They will reject it if they consider it to be contradictory to the patriarchal and Mosaic revelations. Successive discoveries of divine truth may differ, they will say, in fullness and perspicuity, but in principle they must harmonize, as parts of one system. They will

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"retain some veneration for their traditional
 "doctrines, and in their most ancient Targums,
 "as well as in allusions in their sacred books,
 "they will find the notion of one godhead in a
 "trinity of persons, and they will perceive that
 "it was in contradiction to the christians that the
 "later Rabins abandoned the notions of their
 "forefathers. The unitarian scheme of christia-
 "nity is the last, therefore, to which the Jews
 "are likely to be converted, as it is the most at
 "enmity with their ancient faith."

So different, Sir, are your ideas and mine on
 this subject, that one would think we had never
 read the same authors, or lived in the same world.
 Our different views of things must have arisen
 from the different influences to which our minds
 have been exposed; but where you have been, or
 with whom you have lived, I cannot trace. Who
 those *later Rabins* were, who abandoned the notion
 of their fathers, and from expecting the Messiah
 to be God, adopted the idea of his being a mere
 man (a process which I should think not very
 natural) I cannot find. Late as they are, they must
 have been earlier than Justin Martyr; and indeed of
 this memorable *change of opinion*, on so fundamental
 a subject I find no trace whatever. Really, Sir,
 one cannot read such a shameful perversion and
 absolute *making* of ancient history, with respect to
 this doctrine concerning the Messiah, as well as to
 the church of Jerusalem, without a mixture of
 contempt and indignation.

I shall

I shall content myself, on this subject, with appealing to two testimonies. One of them is that of Basnage, and the other of later date.

Basnage, I suppose you will allow, had sufficiently studied the history and opinions of the Jews. He has written largely on the subject; and yet, though a trinitarian himself, he has exploded all the pretences of Cudworth and others to find the doctrine of the trinity either among the ancient or the modern Jews.

"The christians, and the Jews," he says, "separate at the second step in religion. For after having adored together one God, absolutely perfect, they find the moment after the abyss of the trinity, which intirely separates them. The Jew considers *three persons as three Gods*, and this *tritheism* shocks him. The christian, who believes the unity of one God, thinks that the father, the son, and the holy spirit, should all be called God, and have the same worship. It is impossible to reconcile opinions so contrary. There are, however, divines bold enough to attempt it*." You, Sir, are one of those *bold divines*,

* "Les chretiens s'ecartent des Juifs des le second pas qu'ils font dans la religion. Car apres avoir adore ensemble un dieu, souverainement parfait, ils trouvent un moment apres l'abime de la trinite, qui les separe, et les eloigne souverainement. Le Juif regarde trois personnes comme trois dieux, et ce tritheisme lui fait horreur. Le chretien, qui croit l'unite d'un Dieu, veut a meme tems q'on donne
" ce

divines, or, if not bold yourself, at least a follower of the bold.

This writer also says that the "Jews consider themselves as bearing their testimony to the unity of God among all the nations of the world†." Deny these facts if you can. What *ought*, or what *ought not*, to offend the Jews, is not the question. The doctrine of the trinity does, in fact, and from the time that it was started always did, offend the whole body of the Jews, and is, no doubt, one of the greatest obstacles to their conversion.

My second testimony I shall give in the postscript of a letter from a correspondent in the West of England, in the year 1774, containing the opinion of a learned Jew, whom we may presume to be now living, and in this country. At that time, he must have been in the neighbourhood of Barnstable, in Devonshire. An event, which then gave me much concern, occasioned the discontinuance of my correspondence with the writer of that letter; and though desirous of knowing the issue of the business, I have not learned it. If this publication should be the means of bringing me acquainted with it, I shall think myself happy. If the learned Jew

"ce titre au pere, au fils, au Saint Esprit, et q'on les adore.
"Il est impossible de concilier des opinions si contraires;
"cependant il y a des theologiens hardis, qui ont tenté de le
"faire." Hist. des Juifs, Lib. IV. cap. iii. f. 1.

* "Les temoins de l'unité de dieu dans toutes les nations
"du monde." Ib. Lib. VII. cap. xxxiii. f. 15.

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ARCHDEACON OF ST. ALBANS. 123

himself should meet with these letters, I shall be very glad to hear from him, whatever may be his present thoughts on the subject. In the mean time, I would recommend it to you, Mr. Archdeacon, to enquire of any Jews now living, and not to argue from *suppositions*, when *facts* are within your reach.

My correspondent's postscript is as follows. "I have lent your *Institutes* to a sensible and religious Rabbi, bred at the university of Halle. He has read them with great care, and taken curious extracts from them. The clergyman of this parish warned him of the danger of your works, and abused me for lending them to a Jew. The latter had sense enough to despise him, and told him that as long as christianity was thought contradictory to the first law of Judaism, the conversion of his brethren would be impossible. The parson wanted to baptize him. The Rabbi said, religion was a serious matter, and he would be a convert in reality before he would be one in profession. He has been much with me. I hope to be able to send you a pleasing account of him."

I am, &c,

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Of the Personification of the Logos.

REV. SIR,

YOU still deny that the christian Fathers were acquainted with any such thing as the *personification*, that is, *the making a real intelligent person of the logos*, or wisdom of God; whereas, absurd as I acknowledge the notion to be, it was, most indisputably the real doctrine both of Philo, the platonizing Jew, and of those who were called *orthodox christians*, who platonized likewise. I speak within compass, when I say that I can produce hundreds of passages which prove in the clearest manner, that the divinity which they ascribed to Christ was the very same *principle* which had constituted the *wisdom*, and other *powers*, of God the Father; and that the *generation of the Son* was the commencement of the state of *actual personality* of the *logos*, whether in time, as some thought, or from all eternity, as others, which latter was afterwards received as the established doctrine.

This was evidently agreeable to the principles of those platonists, from whom Philo and those christian Fathers derived their opinion, and if you deny this, *a child* as you call me in platonism, p. 15. (which however does not, I hope, prevent

me from being a man in christianity) I shall be able, as you will see in my larger work, to teach you what you are at present ignorant of with respect to it. If this kind of literature be your *home*, p. 163, I must say that you have been a considerable time *from home*, and that you are at present unacquainted with several apartments in your own house. I shall then wait upon you at this house of yours, and endeavour to point them out to you.

With respect to my quotation from Athenagoras, and my account of his meaning, you are pleased to say, p. 124, "it only finishes the proof, if it was before defective, of your incompetency in the subject. It shows that you are so little acquainted with platonism, that your mind cannot readily apprehend a platonic notion, when it is clearly set before you. What you take for my mere conjecture, viz. that *the external display of power*, is the thing that is called *generation*, is the express assertion of Athenagoras, in the very passage which you have quoted."

On the contrary, I maintain that, if your *external display of power* be any thing different from what I have called *the personification of the logos*, or his becoming a proper person, so as to be God, in himself considered, it is contradicted by Athenagoras in this very passage, as well as by all the christian writers who treat of the subject. In this passage,

passage he calls the Son "the first production of the Father, not that he was ever properly made;" (that is, out of nothing) "for God being an eternal mind, had *logos* always in himself, "being always *λογος*;" that is, being always a reasonable intelligent being. Now, Sir, what could any man mean by this expression, but that before this circumstance, or event (which I call the *personification* of the *logos*, and you the *external display of his powers*) took place, there was no more a proper trinity of persons in God, than there is in man; for God, like man, was then simply *λογος*, an intelligent being; wisdom, or intelligence, being one of his attributes. Many of the Fathers use this comparison, supposing the *logos* in God to have been originally exactly similar to *logos*, or reason in man. Now are there, think you, or was it ever imagined that there were, proper distinct persons in the mind of man, merely because that mind was *λογος* rational? The very expression excludes this idea, and must have been intended to exclude it.

But according to all the orthodox Fathers, after this generation of the Son (who before was nothing more with respect to the Father than *reason* is with respect to man) he assumed a proper *distinct personality*; and this generation was with a view to the production of material beings, and not the production itself, or the *display of powers* in that production. For this generation was represented as the proper *act of the eternal Father*, whereas the

the *display of powers* in the production of material beings (if I must adopt your quaint language) was according to them, the proper *act of the Son*. According to them it certainly was the Son, and not the Father, who was the immediate maker of all things. In my opinion Athenagoras's notion was, that this generation of the Son took place *in time*, and not from all eternity; because he says that from the beginning, or from eternity, God was simply *πν, a mind*, having *logos* in himself, as being always λογικῶς, *reasonable, or intelligent*.

Athenagoras, however, as appears from this very passage, the beginning of which I quoted, was very far from having a notion of *three* distinct persons in the trinity. For though he thought, with Justin Martyr, that the *logos*, from the time of his generation, assumed a *permanent personality*, the holy spirit did not, but was like *a beam of the sun*, sometimes emitted from the Father, and sometimes drawn into him again, agreeably to the philosophy of those times concerning the sun and his light. This was also the kind of personal existence that Justin Martyr said that some persons in his time ascribed to the Son, and which was also said to have been the doctrine of Marcellus of Ancyra.

You say, p. 123, that "Tertullian, to prevent the very conclusion which you draw from this analogy, that the *logos* was at some time or another a mere attribute, remarks that nothing empty or unsubstantial can proceed from God.
"For

"For the divine nature admitting neither quality
 "nor accident, every thing belonging to it must
 "be substance." This argument," you add, "is
 "ably stated in the Dialogues of the learned Dr.
 "Leslie."

This indeed, Sir, is an argument that requires both an *able stating*, and an *able defence*; for, in itself, nothing can be more weak. What, think you, could the Fathers mean by saying that, after the emission of the *logos*, the original divine mind was not destitute of *logos*? Did they not mean that he was not destitute of *reason*, or *understanding*? Is there not then necessarily implied an identity of nature between the *logos emitted*, and *logos retained*? Does it not follow from hence, and from its being said that the father was still *λογιστής, rational*, that they were both originally what we call *reason*? Nay, do not some of the Fathers compare the emission of the *logos* from God to the emission of reason from man, in discoursing with one another?

You say, for it is *you* that say this (I have met with nothing so very absurd in Tertullian) that "the divine nature admitting neither quality nor accident, every thing belonging to it must be substance." The divine being then has no *properties*, no *attributes*, no *perfections* at all, which is, in fact, denying his very *being*; for what is *being* without *properties*? Pray, Sir, has the Son or the Holy Spirit, any attributes? In all my reading I do not remember to have met with
 any

any absurdity equal to this, except your own peculiar conceits, that "one mind can beget another by the contemplation of its perfections" (now called *substances*) a notion which you ascribe to *all the Fathers*, though I will venture to say it is not to be found in any of them. Strange enough, to be sure, are some of their conceits, but not quite so strange and absurd as this. There is, as you somewhere justly observe, a progress in *absurdity*, as well as in *truth*.

Lactantius, you acknowledge, expresses himself clearly enough according to my idea of this subject, but you dispose of his *orthodoxy*, as you did of Origen's *veracity*. You boldly deny it. This, indeed, is a very compendious method of answering me. But, Sir, the question is not whom you are *now* pleased to call orthodox, but who was deemed to be so in the age in which he lived. Now I challenge you to prove that any writer of the age of Lactantius considered him as heterodox. Indeed it was very unlikely that the man who was chosen tutor to a son of Constantine, should have been a person of that class.

In order to undervalue this excellent writer, you say, p. 129. that "he ascribed a beginning to the existence of the eternal Father. No wonder then," you add, "that he should ascribe a beginning to the Son's existence. You are welcome, Sir," you say, "to any advantage you
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"may be able to derive from the authority of such a writer." Lactantius, however, candidly construed, may perhaps be said only to have used an improper expression, namely, that *God made himself*, meaning no more than we do when we say that God is *self-existent*, which, in fact, implies the very contrary of what you ascribe to him. He advances this in proof of his general maxim, *Nec enim potest, ut ab ullo esse generatus, qui ipse universa generavit*, *he cannot be created of any who himself created all things*, which clearly implies that he could not be created at all. For though the *thing made* had a beginning, the *maker* could have none; and who was the *maker* in this case, but God himself? The term *self-existent* is, in fact (as will appear if it be analyzed) equally improper; for it implies that God is the *cause* of his own existence. For this reason, some who wish to speak with exactness, avoid that term, and rather say that God is *eternal*; but they do not tax those who use the the word *self-existent* with really believing that God had a beginning.

Whatever mistakes Lactantius may be supposed to have made as a *metaphysician*, it does not appear that in his own time he was charged with any; and they might have been as little noticed still, if he had been a *sound divine*; and though you suppose that he ascribed a beginning to the eternal Father, yet, if you had found that from the moment of the Father's existence, that

of the Son, had, in his idea, commenced also, you would perhaps have contented yourself with smiling at his notion; or at least have abated of the severity of your censure.

Constantine, whom you quote, p. 127. as in your favour, is directly against you. Taking your own words, he says, "the Son was begotten," or rather he himself came forth (being "even ever in the Father) for the setting in order of the things which were made by him. "Here," you say, "the emperor expounds *generation by coming forth.*" But then, Sir, he does not say that this *generation*, or *coming forth*, was the same thing with *the setting in order the things that were made by him*; but it was evidently something that took place previous to this *setting in order*, and with a view to it; so that this mysterious *generation* preceded what you quaintly call *the projection of energies*, and was not the same thing with it.

You still, likewise confound the doctrine of Arius, p. 116. with that of the *personification of the Logos*, than which no two things were more different, having always been opposed to each other, as you must have known, had you been so well read, as you pretend to be, in the ancient ecclesiastical writers, since a great proportion of their works is occupied in the discussion of this subject. The Arians maintained that Christ was

a being *created out of nothing*, as other creatures were, notwithstanding the vastness of his powers, which were equal to the creation of all other things, visible and invisible; and not believing an eternal creation, they likewise said that there was a time when the Son did not exist. Both these propositions were denied by the orthodox of that age, who maintained that Christ was not made out of *nothing*, for that he was the *Logos*, the *wisdom*, the *power*, &c. of the Father, and that he had always existed in the Father as reason does in man, though his *personality* was by some supposed to have commenced in time. You must give me leave to say you are but little acquainted with the principles even of platonism, and especially those of the later platonists, from whom the christian Fathers more immediately derived their notions, if you are not able to enter into this idea.

This personification, or the commencement of an actual *personality* of what was an *attribute* of God, is a strange idea, but, strange as it is, it nevertheless actually took place in the minds of thousands, and was in truth all the orthodoxy of the earlier ages. This *incipient orthodoxy* grew immediately out of platonism, and is certainly absurd enough. The orthodoxy of the later ages, and of the present, grew out of that, and is infinitely more absurd. Their doctrine was mere *nonsense*, yours the plainest of all
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contradictions, as I shall clearly shew in my next letter.

"What difference there may be," you say, p. 118. "between a making out of nothing, and the conversion of a mere attribute into a substance, or how a person made out of an attribute may differ from a person made out of nothing, I would rather, Sir, that you, than I, should take the trouble to explain." I have explained it as well as such an absurdity can be explained, but it behoves you to explain it much more than it does me; for, absurd as the notion is, it certainly prepared the way for the still more absurd notion of *three equal divine persons in one godhead*.

I am, &c.

K 3 LETTER

L E T T E R XIII.

Considerations relating to the Doctrine of the Trinity.

REV. SIR,

I Own I was particularly desirous of hearing what you could possibly say on the subject of my *seventh letter*, in which I advanced some general considerations relating to the doctrine of the *trinity*; but, unfortunately, you "content yourself," p. 136. "with giving only a general reply to some parts of that letter. A particular answer," you say, "to the several objections which it contains, would lead me into metaphysical disquisitions, which I wish to decline, because in that subject I foresee that we should want common principles and a common language."

Now I make no doubt, Sir, but that, if it had been possible for you to have given any plausible answer to the difficulties started in that letter, you would have found some principle, common or uncommon, on which to found it, and some language also, which might have been intelligible to me and your readers. But as you profess that you do not expect to convince *me*, it would have been quite sufficient for your purpose, if you could

could have found common principles, and common language for others.

I am the more concerned at your silence, as I was in hopes of having some farther account of your own peculiar notion of *the necessary origin of the Son from the Father's contemplation of his own perfections*; but, to my great mortification, I find not one gleam of more light on this curious subject. You said that this doctrine was agreeable to the notions of all the Fathers, as well as to the sacred writers, and I challenged you to produce any authority for it, except what exists in your own imagination. In my opinion, nothing can be conceived more absurd than the idea of the necessary production of an intelligent being, possessed of actual substantial personality, equal in all respects to the original intelligent being, from the mere self-contemplation of that original being's perfections. I said that nothing in the Jewish Cabbala could be more absurd. You intimate, p. 149. that I may know but little of the Jewish Cabbala; but for my purpose it is quite enough, that it is a known proverbial expression to denote the *extreme of absurdity*; and if so, whatever the Jewish Cabbala may really be (of which I may perhaps know as much as yourself, and of which we may each of us soon learn enough from Basnage) the phrase could not be misapplied.

I find,

I find, however, a few other things on the subject of that letter, which are curious enough; so that, for the amusement, if not the instruction of my readers, I shall make some observations on them.

I.

In the first place, I still think that you yourself are not perfectly orthodox; for besides your virtual disapprobation of the *damnatory clause* in the Athanasian creed, p. 165, you allow a real *superiority* in the Father. "If," you say, p. 145, "from such expressions as *my Father is greater than I*, you would be content to infer that the Almighty Father is indeed the fountain and the center of divinity, and that the equality of godhead is to be understood with some mysterious subordination of the Son to the Father, you would have the concurrence of the ancient Fathers, and of the advocates of the true faith in all ages." But give me leave to say, that any *proper subordination*, mysterious or not mysterious, implies *inferiority*, and is an infringement of the doctrine of the *perfect equality* of the three persons; so that it cannot be, as your creed says, *none is afore or after another*. You say, p. 149, "I maintain the equality of the three persons in all the attributes of the divine nature. I maintain their equality in rank and authority, with respect to all created things, whatever relations or differences may subsist between themselves." But their equal superiority to all created beings

is no proof at all of any proper equality among themselves. If so, all men would be equal among themselves, because all men are superior to brutes.

Your notion of a real subordination, which must imply *inferiority*, and indeed *imperfection*, in any of the persons in the trinity, is certainly not the orthodoxy that took place after the council of Nice, and that of the Athanasian creed,

II.

I now come to something still more extraordinary. "I maintain," you say, p. 148. "that the *three persons are one being*—I maintain that each person by himself is God; because each possesses fully every attribute of the divine nature." Then, Sir, I assert, that you maintain as palpable a *contradiction* as it is in the power of man to form an idea of. The term *being* may be predicated of every thing, and therefore, of each of the three persons in the trinity. For to say that Christ, for instance, is God, but that there is no *being*, no *substance*, to which his attributes may be referred, were manifestly absurd; and therefore when you say, that "each of these persons is by himself God," you must mean, and in effect say, that the Father separately considered, has a *being*, that the Son likewise, separately considered, has his *being*, and likewise, that the Holy Spirit separately considered, has his

his *being*. Now, Sir, if you will be pleased to count them up, you will find that you have got *three beings*, as well as *three persons*; and what can these three beings be but *three Gods*, without supposing that there are "three co-ordinate persons, " or three Fathers, three Sons, or three Holy " Ghosts." If you like an algebraic expression better than this, it will stand thus, $1+1+1=3$. Have the courage then, Sir, to speak out, and say what you must *mean*, if you have any meaning at all, that you worship *three Gods*.

But you say, p. 148. that "these three persons are all included in the very idea of a God, " and that for that reason, as well as for the identity of the attributes in each, it were impious " and absurd to say that there are three Gods." If there be any foundation for this remark, it must be impossible for any man to have an idea of a God, without having at the same time an idea of these three persons; and then either there cannot be any such thing as an unitarian, denying these three persons in the godhead, or else all unitarians are in fact *atheists*, having no idea of any God at all.

As you seem to have bewildered yourself very much upon the subject of *three persons and one God*, I shall enter a little farther into the metaphysical analysis of it. By the words *being, substance, substratum*, &c. we can mean nothing more than

than the *foundation*, as it were, of *properties*, or some thing to which, in our idea, we refer all the particular attributes of whatever exists. In fact, they are terms that may be predicated of every thing that is the subject of thought or discourse, all the discrimination of things depending upon their *peculiar properties*. So that whenever the properties differ, we say that there is a corresponding difference in the *things, beings, or substances* themselves. Consequently, if the Father, Son, and Spirit differ in any respect, so as to have *different properties*, either in relation to themselves, or to other beings, we must, according to the analogy of all language, say that they are *three different beings, or substances*.

Supposing again, that there is what you call an *identity of attributes* in each of them, so that, being considered one after the other, no difference could be perceived even in idea, as may be supposed to be the case of *three men*, who should perfectly resemble one another in all external and internal properties; and supposing, moreover, that there should be a perfect coincidence in all their thoughts and actions; though there might be a perfect *harmony* among them, and this might be called *unity*, they would still be *numerically three*. Consequently, though the Father, Son, and Spirit had no real differences, but as you say, p. 145. they had "the most perfect identity of nature, the most entire unity of will, and consent of intellect, and an incessant co-operation

"tion in the exertion of common powers, to a common purpose," yet would they, according to the analogy of language, not be *one God*, but *three Gods*; or, which is the same thing, they would be *three beings*, with equal divine natures, just as the *three men* would be three beings with equal human natures.

Had you never heard of the *Parmenides*, I should have had some hopes of your understanding these *modern metaphysics*. But though I suppose I have left you far behind (perhaps gone to look into Plato, to see what he says on the subject) I shall proceed without you, and give the modern reader my opinion with respect to the proper and only intelligible use of the word *person*.

The term *being*, as I have observed, may be predicated of every thing, without distinction; but the term *person* is limited to *intelligent beings*. Three men, therefore, are not only three beings, but likewise three persons; the former is the *genus*, and the latter the *species*. But a *person* is not less a *being* on this account; for each *man* may be said to be a *being*, as well as a *person*. Consequently, though the word *person* be properly applied to each of the three component parts of your trinity, yet as *person* is a *species*, comprehended under the genus *being*, they must be *three beings*, as well as *three persons*.

While

While you, Sir, are either absent, or wondering at these *novelties*, I proceed to observe, that the term *God* is a subdivision under the term *person*, because we define *God*, to be *an intelligent being possessed of all possible perfections*. Consequently, if the Father, Son, and Spirit, be each of them possessed of all possible perfections, which you do not deny, they are each of them *a person*, each of them *a being*, and each of them *a God*; and what is this but making *three Gods*. Avoid this conclusion from these principles, or assume other principles more just and natural, if you can.

These, Sir, if you be within hearing at all, are such metaphysics as you might have learned from Mr. Lock, if you had not been, unfortunately for yourself and your flock, poring so long over the Parmenides. You will probably object to my definition of the word *person*, as applied to the doctrine of the trinity; but if you give any other definition, I will venture to assert, that you might as well say, that the Father, Son, and Spirit, are three *Abacadabra's* as *three persons*. They will be equally words without meaning.

Athanasius, and many of the ancient Fathers, after the council of Nice, became absolute tritheists on this principle, believing that the Father, Son, and Spirit are no otherwise *one*, than as three particular men may be considered as one. Athanasius, considering this very difficulty, says, "since the Father is called God, the Son God, " and

“and the Holy Spirit God, how is it that there are
 “not three Gods?” he answers, “because where
 “there is a common nature, the name of the dig-
 “nity is likewise common*.” And he illustrates
 this, by God’s calling the whole human race by
 the name of *man*, in the singular number, and by
 Moses’s speaking of the *horse* and the *horseman*
 being drowned in the Red Sea, when in fact,
 great numbers of each sort were intended. “If
 “this,” says he, “be the case with respect to
 “men, who differ so much as they do from each
 “other, so that all men may be called *one man*,
 “much more may we call the trinity one God,
 “when their dignity is undivided, they have one
 “kingdom, one power, will, and energy, which
 “distinguishes the trinity from created things†.”

I am far from saying that Athanasius is con-
 sistent with himself in this account of the unity of
 the three persons in the trinity; for he elsewhere
 says that there is *one God*, because there is *one un-*
begotten Father, the sole fountain of deity, &c. but
 this representation occurs in many of the Fathers,
 and in my larger history I shall shew to what a
 variety of other miserable subterfuges the ortho-

* Καὶ πως ὅπως δύναται λεγέσθαι ὁ πατήρ θεός, καὶ ὁ υἱός
 θεός, καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον θεός, καὶ ἡ τρεῖς εἰσὶ θεοί; οὗ
 κοινὰ τὰ τῆς φύσεως, κοινὸν καὶ ὄνομα τῆς ἀξίας. De Com-
 muni Essentia, Opera, vol. I. p. 213.

† Διὰ τὸ κοινὸν τῆς φύσεως πάντα ἡ δόξα καὶ ἡ ἀδραστεία
 ἐκλήθη. οὗτε δὲ ἀμέριστος ἡ ἀξία, μία βασιλεία, μία δύναμις,
 καὶ βολὴ καὶ ἐνεργεία, ἰδιαζέσθαι τὴν τριάδα ἀπὸ τῆς κτίσεως,
 ἐνὰ λεγῶ θεόν. Ibid. p. 214.

dox were driven to maintain the unity of their trinity.

In the dialogue against the Macedonians, written after the age of Athanasius, the orthodox speaker is represented as saying, "as Paul, Peter, and Timothy, are of one nature, and three hypostases; so I say, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are three hypostases, and one nature*."

You say, p. 5. "The opinion of three persons in the godhead, unrelated to each other, and distinct in all respects, is rank tritheism; because what are unrelated, and distinct in all respects, are many in all respects; and being many in all respects, cannot in any respect be one." But no *relation*, let it be ever so intimate, can remove their *numerical difference*. Let three men be *connected* in any manner that you can imagine, they can only be *one*, as partaking of the *same nature*, and therefore, though they resemble one another ever so much, they can only be said to be *similar* in all respects; but still they will be numerically *three*. In like manner, suppose any relations you please, known or unknown, between the three persons to whom the title of *God* equally belongs, they will no more make *one God*, than three related men can make

* Ὡςπερ παυλῶ, καὶ πέτρος, καὶ τιμοθέῳ, ὁμοίως μίας ἐστὶ καὶ τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις, ὡς πατέρα, καὶ υἱόν, καὶ ἅγιον πνεῦμα, τρεῖς ὑποστάσεις λόγῳ, καὶ μίαν ἐνσιν. Opera, vol. II. p. 269.

one man, but must be numerically *three Gods*. Councils and synods, kings and houses of parliament, may decree that *three are one*, and archdeacons may defend the doctrine, but miracles cannot prove it. As you and your friends say with respect to some late proceedings in the Royal Society, "*Two and two ever will be four*, and the "*three angles of a triangle will be equal to two right angles.*"

But I find it is in vain to appeal to reason, or even to the scriptures. Your doctrine of the trinity was not derived from reason, or the scriptures, but from Plato. "I then set myself," you say, p. 163. "to consider whether I knew enough of the divine *unity*, to pronounce the "*trinity* an *infringement* of it. Upon this point, "the Platonists, whose acquaintance I now began to cultivate, soon brought me to a right mind."

They did the same good office for Austin before you, and I fear they are still doing the same for others, notwithstanding the cautions given us in the scriptures against the mixture of vain and absurd philosophy with christianity. You kindly advise me to take the same course. "If," you say, p. 142, "you imagine that the absolute "*unity* of the divine substance is more easily to "*be explained than the trinity*, let me entreat "you Sir, to read the *Parmenides*. It is, indeed, "in Plato's school, if any where, that a man's "*eyes*

"eyes are likely to be opened to his own ignorance." But, Sir, what must they do who cannot read the *Parmenides*? I suppose they must go without the doctrine of the trinity, and like the lower order of christians in the time of Origen, be content with the *corporeal gospel*, the plain doctrine of *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*. But with this the apostle Paul was contented, and so am I.

I have, however, read the *Parmenides*, and though I expect you will exult over me as usual, calling me, p. 15. *a child in platonism*, and say, that "*I cannot apprehend a platonic notion when it is clearly set before me,*" p. 124, I have no scruple to declare, that I was not able to get one ray of good sense from the whole of it; I should even think the extracting of sun-beams from cucumbers the more hopeful project of the two. And so far am I from advising the reading of it for any useful purpose, that I should rather say, if a man perceives any incipient cloudiness in his head, and wishes to have the little understanding that he has left utterly confounded, let him read the *Parmenides**. I shall

* Among other *mysteries*, as Mr. Sydenham call them, of the *Parmenides*, Plato, after shewing that *littleness* cannot belong either to the *whole* or the *part* of any thing, concludes, that "*nothing is little but littleness itself,*" ὅτι τί ἐστὶ μικρὸν φάναι αὐτὸς τῆς μικρότητος. It would be no bad parody on this to say, Nothing is nonsensical but nonsense itself; and this nonsense (if it can exist in the abstract) is in the *Parmenides*.

say the same with respect to almost all the metaphysics of the ancients; and it is very possible that I may have given as much attention to these things as you have done, though I have not been so ostentatious of it. Any person since the time of Mr. Locke, may say this of all the ancients without much arrogance. So far, however, I agree with you, that the study of the Parmenides may do very well by way of preparation for that of the doctrine of the trinity*.

III.

Perhaps the most extraordinary part of your whole performance, is what you say of the *mysteriousness of the doctrine of the divine unity*, and of the unitarians having nothing to plead for themselves but single texts of scripture, interpreted in a figurative manner. "If the word" (spoken of by John) you say, p. 138, "be the divine attribute *wisdom*, then that attribute, in the degree which was equal to the formation of the universe, in this view of the scripture doctrine, was conveyed entire into the mind of a mere man, the son of a Jewish carpenter. A much greater difficulty, in my apprehension, than any that is to be found in the catholic faith."

* If Plato's school has this talismanic power of opening a man's eyes to his own ignorance, I would advise Dr. Horsley to continue in it a while longer; for this is a branch of science in which he has yet something to learn. Nor will it be amiss if he take his good and able ally along with him; though, as it will lessen his presumption, it may hurt him as a *Reviewer*, which, no doubt, ought to be considered.

In reading this, and other passages in your *Letters*, I cannot help admiring your talent of lessening the difficulties of your own scheme, and magnifying those of others. If you use the same telescope, you certainly turn different ends to different objects.

Pray, Sir, what Socinian ever maintained that "the divine attribute wisdom, in the degree which was equal to the formation of the universe, was conveyed entire into the mind of Jesus Christ?" What we believe, and all that is required by our interpretation of the *logos* (as meaning the divine attribute, *wisdom*) is, that a *portion* only of the same wisdom that formed the universe, was communicated to Christ, a portion sufficient to enable him to do what he actually did, and to say what he actually said. The Socinians do not believe that Christ made the universe, or that he was any way instrumental in making it.

For my own part, I never before heard of, or suspected, any difficulty in God's making man the instrument, by which to do what man alone could not do. Did not God suggest to Moses what he could not have delivered of himself? In many of the miracles which attended the release of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, and their passage through the wilderness, Moses was the immediate, or ostensible agent, but the *power* was of God; and yet this was no proper infusing of the divine power into Moses. The power was still the incommuni-

cable attribute of the Divine Being. Accordingly, Jesus says, that it was not *himself*, but the *father within him*, or acting by him, that did the works; and that the *words which he spake were not his own*. Moreover, he says of the apostles, that they should do greater things than he himself had done. From this, then, you ought to conclude, that the divine attributes of wisdom and power were conveyed entire into the minds of the apostles, or even that they were Gods superior to Christ. Such reasoning as this, I have hardly patience to refute. But, surely, you cannot be serious in saying that this difficulty in the Socinian scheme is equal to that of *three persons in one God* in the Athanasian trinity, or to that in your own account of the Platonic trinity.

But perhaps the most extraordinary part of your whole work will be thought to be the following. In answer to my saying that "many passages in scripture inculcate the doctrine of the divine unity in the clearest and strongest manner," you say, p. 131. "Be pleased, Sir, to produce one of the many;" meaning evidently, that there is no such passage; and yet you add, "the unitarians themselves pretend not that their doctrine is to be found in the plain literal sense of holy writ. On the contrary, they take the greatest pains to explain away the literal meanings."

Now, Sir, if you had really read any unitarian treatise at all, you must have known that this representation is wholly untrue.

mentation is the reverse of the fact. We unitarians certainly *pretend* at least, whether we be able to prove it or not, that the *general tenor, and plain literal sense of scripture* is in our favour, that they are only *particular texts*, and those ill-understood, that you avail yourselves of; and we say, that there is no difficulty in interpreting even those texts in perfect consistency with the unitarian doctrine, if the true idiom of the language be considered.

You complain of my not *reading*, but only *looking through* authors. But surely, you cannot have even *looked through* the very *Letters* of mine that you are professedly replying to. Let me therefore, bring again before your view, a paragraph or two in those letters, which, as far as *pretensions* go, directly contradict your confident assertion. See p. 90. where you will find as follows: "I will venture to say, that for one text in which you can pretend to find any thing harsh or difficult to me, I will engage to produce ten that shall create more difficulty to you. How strangely must you torture the plainest language, and in which there is not a shadow of figure, to interpret to your purpose, 1 Tim. ii. 5. *There is one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus.* 1 Cor. viii. 6. *To us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him;* or that expression of our Saviour himself, John

“ xvii. 2. *That they might know thee, the only true*
 “ *God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.*
 “ Never upbraid us unitarians with torturing
 “ the scriptures, while you have these, and a hun-
 “ dred other plain texts, to strain at, and to bend
 “ to your Athanasian hypothesis; besides many
 “ *general arguments*, from reason and the scrip-
 “ tures, of more real force than any particular
 “ texts, to answer.”

This, Sir, was certainly answering your chal-
 lenge to produce *one plain text* in favour of the
 unitarian doctrine before it was thrown out. I
 appeal to yourself for the obvious sense of the
 passages I have now recited; and you say, p. 23,
 “ It is a principle with me, that the true sense of
 “ any phrase in the New Testament is what may
 “ be called its standing sense, that which will be
 “ the first to occur to common people, of every
 “ country, and in every age*.”

I would also refer you to a small piece I lately
 published, entitled *A general View of the Arguments*
for the Unity of God, and against the Divinity and Pre-
existence of Christ, from Reason, from the Scriptures,
and from History, which you seem to have seen, as
 you refer to my *two penny pamphlets*, for this is

* It is remarkable, that the orthodox, even after the council
 of Nice, complained of the advantage which the unitarians had
 in appealing to the literal sense of the scriptures. “ If,” says
 Gregory Nyssen, “ a man rests in the bare letter, so far he
 “ judaizes in opinion, and has not learned that a christian is
 “ not

fold for two-pence. There you will find, not only that Socinians pretend to have the clear sense of scripture in their favour, but many of those passages, expressive of that clear sense, produced, I there observe, p. 10. that "the scriptures contain the clearest and the most express declarations, that there is but *one God*, without ever mentioning any exception in favour of a trinity, or guarding us against being led into any mistake by such general and unlimited expressions." And if this language, as you suppose, always respected the multiplicity of gods among the heathens, why is this one God, in the New Testament, always called the *Father*, and even *the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*; and why are we no where told that this one God is the *trinity*, consisting of *the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost*? This, Sir, is the language of your litany only. The Bible used in

"not the disciple of the letter, but of the spirit; for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." Ουκ εν, ει ψλω παραμεινιτω γραμματι, η καλα τειο το μερος Ιουδαζει τη γνωμη, η επω πεπαιδευται οτι εν χει γραμματοι εσι χριστιανου μαθηται, αλλα πνευματι. το γαρ γραμμα, φησιν, απεκλεινει, το δε πνιμα ζωοποιει, *Contra Eunomium Oratio xvi. Opera, Vol. II. p. 341.*

It is to be observed, that by *judaizing* was meant adopting the doctrine of *the simple humanity of Christ*. For the ancient unitarians were commonly compared by the orthodox to *Jews*, and the *Arians* to *Gentiles*, as worshipper of *two Gods*, the Arian logos not being of the same substance with the Father; and therefore a maker of the world, or a God, quite distinct from him.

our conventicles, contains no such barbarous jargon.

I would also recommend to your perusal another pamphlet of mine, called *An Appeal to the serious and candid Professors of Christianity*, of which more than ten thousand have been sold for a penny each; and of this I have lately published a new edition, and have annexed to it the remarkable *Trial of Mr. Elwall*, of Wolverhampton, in this neighbourhood, for his publications in defence of the Socinian doctrine. These small publications of mine have, I trust, done much good, though you will call it much mischief, in this country; and I rejoice in perceiving the increase of this good, or this mischief, every day; and I have no doubt of the successful spread of religious truth by means of these publications, notwithstanding all you can do to counteract them, as you boast, by means of the *Monthly Review*.

IV.

In one thing I am glad to find that you and I entertain the same opinion, which is that there is no medium between admitting the simple humanity of Christ, and that he is properly God, "Having once admitted," you say p. 162. "his pre-existence in an exalted state, I saw the necessity of placing him at the head of the creation, Being thus convinced that our Lord
Jesus

"Jesus Christ is indeed the maker of all things,
 "I found that I could not rest satisfied with
 "the notion of *a maker of the universe, not*
 "*God.* I saw that all the extravagancies of the
 "Gnostics hung upon that one principle, and I
 "could have little opinion of the truth of a principle,
 "which seemeth so big with mischief."

You also observe, very justly, p. 137. "Can
 "any power or wisdom less than the supreme be a
 "sufficient ground for the trust we are required to
 "place in providence? Make the wisdom and
 "the power of our ruler what you please, still, upon
 "the Arian principle, it is the wisdom and the
 "power of a creature. Where then will be the
 "certainty that the evil which we find in the world
 "has not crept in through some imperfection in
 "the original contrivance, or in the present manage-
 "ment; since every intellect below the first may
 "be liable to error, and any power short of the su-
 "preme may be inadequate to purposes of a cer-
 "tain magnitude? But if evil may have crept in
 "thus, what assurance can we have that it will ever
 "be extirpated?"

But if there be no proper medium between the
 Athanasian and the Socinian scheme, which I readily
 admit, I also maintain that there is no medium at
 all between the Socinian doctrine and an absolute
 contradiction, for such Athanasianism is; so that
 there is no resource but in the Socinian doctrine,
 oppose it as much as you will.

I am, &c.

L E T T E R XIV.

Of Prayer to Christ.

REV. SIR,

HAVING got *three persons*, all of them possessed of all divine perfections, all of them having intercourse with mankind, and consequently all of them naturally *objects of prayer*, I do not wonder that you appear to be a little embarrassed in your ideas of what is proper to be done with respect to each of them, individually considered. "That the Father," you say, p. 103. "is a proper object of prayer, God forbid that I should ever not acknowledge. That he is *the* proper object, in the sense in which you seem to make the assertion, in prejudice and exclusion of the other persons, God forbid that I should ever concede. I deny not that there is an honour personally due to him as the Father. There is also an honour personally due to the Son, as the Son, and to the Spirit as the Spirit, but our knowledge of the personal distinctions is so obscure, in comparison of our apprehension of the general attributes of the godhead, that it should seem that *the divinity* (the *Deity*) is rather to be generally worshipped in the three persons jointly, and indifferently, than

"than that any distinct honours are to be offered
 "to each separately. Prayer, however, for
 "succour against external persecution, seems
 "addressed with particular propriety to the Son."

Now, Sir, as this is a thing that relates to
practice, I should have imagined that, if each of
 the three persons had been to be addressed sepa-
 rately, we should have been distinctly informed
 concerning the circumstances in which we were to
 pray to one of them, and not to the others; con-
 sidering how difficult it must be, from the nature
 of the thing, for mere men to distinguish the se-
 parate rights of *three divine persons*. That you
 yourself have made some mistake in this business,
 will not, I think, be difficult to shew. In order to
 this, let us consider how your *supposition* or *theory*,
 corresponds to the *fact*. For if it be not sup-
 ported by corresponding facts, how ingenious, or
 probable, soever it may seem to be, *a priori*, it
 must fall to the ground. You will agree with
 me, I imagine, that the apostles and primitive
 christians knew whether the Father or the Son
 was the more proper object of prayer in the time
 of persecution. Let us see then both what *di-
 rections* they gave, and also what they themselves
 actually *did* in this case.

The apostle James, writing to christians in a
 state of persecution, says, ch. i. 2. &c. *My brethren
 count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations, or
 trials,*

trials, &c. *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God.* You will hardly say that in this he advises them to apply to *Christ*, or to *the trinity*, for direction in these circumstances. If you do, I will venture to assert, that your hypothesis has no countenance either in the scriptures, or in any christian writer before the council of Nice. For they all understood *the Father alone* to be intended whenever mention is made of *God* absolutely.

Peter, writing to christians in the same situation, says, 1 Pet. iv. 19. *wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful creator.* This is certainly meant of *God the Father*; but more evidently must we so interpret, 1 Pet. v. 10. *The God of all grace, who has called us into his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you.* I do not find here, or any where else in the scriptures, any direction to pray to *Christ* in time of persecution, or indeed, in any other circumstances.

Let us now attend to some particulars in the history of the apostles. When Herod had put to death James, the brother of John, and imprisoned Peter, we read, Acts xii. 5. that *prayer was made without ceasing of the church to God, not to Christ, for him.* When Paul and Silas were in prison at Philippi, we read, Acts xvi. 25. that *they*

they sung praises to God, not to Christ. And when Paul was warned of what would befall him if he went to Jerusalem, Acts xxi. 14. he said, *the will of the Lord be done.* This, you must suppose, was meant of God *the Father*, because Christ himself used the same language in this sense, when, in praying to the Father, he said, *Not my will but thine be done.*

These, you may perhaps say, are only *incidental circumstances*, on which no great stress is to be laid. But in Acts vi. 24. &c. we have a prayer of some length addressed to God the Father, at the very beginning of the persecution of christians, when Peter and John had been examined before the high priest, and his court, and had been threatened by them. As I suspect that you may not have given much attention to the tenor of it, I shall recite the whole, which is as follows:

“ And when they heard that, they lifted up their
 “ voice to God, with one accord, and said, Lord,
 “ thou art God, who hast made heaven and earth,
 “ and the sea, and all that in them is; who by
 “ the mouth of thy servant David, hast said, *Why*
 “ *did the heathen rage and the people imagine vain*
 “ *things, The kings of the earth stood up, and the*
 “ *rulers were gathered together, against the Lord,*
 “ *and against his Christ.* For of a truth against thy
 “ holy child” (or servant) “ Jesus whom thou hast
 “ anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with
 “ the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were
 “ gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy
 “ hand

“hand and thy counsel determined before to be
 “done. And now Lord behold their threat-
 “nings, and grant unto thy servants, that with
 “all boldness they may speak thy word, by
 “stretching forth thy hand to heal; and that
 “signs and wonders may be done by the name
 “of thy holy child” (or servant) “Jesus.”

We have now examined some particulars both of the *instructions*, and the *examples* of scripture, with regard to the proper object of prayer in time of persecution; from which it appears, that, even in this case, we have no authority to pray to any other than that one God, to whom Christ himself prayed in his affliction; and if we be not authorized to pray to Christ in time of persecution, there is, by your own acknowledgment, less propriety in praying to him on any other occasion.

As you profess a great regard for those who are called *apostolical Fathers*, let us attend to the prayer of Polycarp, when he was tied to the stake, ready to be burned alive. Now this prayer which is a pretty remarkable one, is addressed to God the Father, and not to Christ; so that this disciple of the apostle John, did not think the example of Stephen any precedent for him. The prayer begins as follows: “O Lord, God Al-
 “mighty, the Father of thy well-beloved and
 “blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have re-
 “ceived the knowledge of thee, the God of
 angels

“angels and powers, and of every creature, and
“especially of the whole race of just men,” &c.

You see then, Sir, how greatly you have been misled by your *speculative theology*, by your attention to particular texts, single incidents, and imaginary *proprieties*, without attending to the general tenor of scripture, the plain directions that are there given for our conduct, and the constant practice of the apostles, which supply the best interpretation of their doctrine. To conclude, as you have done, from the single case of Stephen, that all christians are authorised to pray to Christ, is like concluding that all matter has a tendency to go upwards, because a needle will do so, when a magnet is held over it. When you shall be in the same circumstances with Stephen; having your mind strongly impressed with a vision of Christ sitting at the right-hand of God, you may then, perhaps, be authorised to address yourself to him as he did; but the whole tenor of the scriptures proves that, otherwise, you have no authority at all for any such practice.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R XV.

Of the Unitarian Principles with respect to Mahometanism and Infidelity.

REV. SIR,

WE are not, I hope, to judge of your acquaintance with the opinions of the ancients, (which we have dignified with the name of *learning*) by the correctness with which you state the opinions of the moderns, even those which you undertake to controvert, and therefore ought to have studied. Here, Sir, you certainly have no choice but of the grossest *ignorance*, and consequently *presumption*, or the most perverse and wilful of all misrepresentations. Your ignorance of the state of the dissenters, of which a sufficient specimen has been given, shews that you are far from being *at home* even in your own country; but the account you give in your sixteenth letter, of the principles of the unitarians, and the relation they bear to those of unbelievers, is such as can hardly be accounted for from mere ignorance. I fear it has a worse origin. I hope I shall not be thought uncandid; but I cannot put any favourable construction upon your insinuations on this subject.

You

You say, p. 151. "the whole difference between you and them" (that is, between the unitarians and Mahometans) "seems very inconsiderable. The true mussulman believes as much, or rather more, of Christ than the unitarian requires to be believed; and though the unitarians have not yet recognized the divine mission of Mahomet, there is good ground to think they will not long stand out. In unitarian writings of the last century, it is allowed of Mahomet, that he had no other design than to restore the belief of the unity of God.—Of his religion, that it was not meant for a new religion, but for a restitution of the true intent of the christian.—Of the great prevalence of the Mahometan religion, that it has been owing not to force and the sword, but to that one truth contained in the Alcoran, the unity of God. With these friendly dispositions towards each other, it should seem that the Mahometan and unitarian might easily be brought to agree."

Now all these propositions which you have laid down as *certain facts*, are so highly improbable in themselves, that few persons, perhaps, will believe that you can be serious in advancing them; and I shall think myself at liberty to treat them as groundless calumnies, till you shall produce some authority or evidence for them. For the state of things, as they now are, and which ought to be known to you, gives not the least

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colour

colour of plausibility to them. If the difference between the unitarians and the Mahometans be so inconsiderable, that there is good ground to think that the unitarians will soon acknowledge the divine mission of Mahomet, how has it happened that none of them have yet done it, and actually turned mussulmen? I think it is possible that, notwithstanding the extensive reading of which you give us so many intimations, I may be as well acquainted with the unitarian writers of the last age as you can pretend to be; and I have never met with any such passage as you mention; and I think if you could have produced any such in support of your assertions, you would not have failed to do it.

You may at any time see what I have said of the Mahometan religion on several occasions, and also what other unitarians of the present age have advanced concerning it. Do you find in my publications, or theirs, any thing favourable to the pretensions of Mahomet? And if the tendency of the unitarian principles be to approximate towards those of the Mahometans, it might be expected that they would have been nearer to each other now than they were in the last century. I shall therefore, unless authorities are produced, consider what you have said on this subject as another specimen of your *invention of facts*, and of your unparalleled effrontery in publishing them, in order to throw an odium upon the unitarians. You might indeed almost

as well assert that all the unitarians in England are already so far Mahometans, that, to your certain knowledge, they are actually circumcised. What respect, Sir, can be due to the man who has not scrupled to have recourse to these calumnies, for they cannot be called by any softer name, in order to blacken his adversaries? And what can we think of the *cause* that requires to be thus supported?

Your curious account of "the negotiation regularly opened," p. 152, "on the part of the English unitarians in the reign of Charles the Second, with the ambassador of the emperor of Morocco," for which you quote Dr. Leslie, was probably an invention of his, similar to those of yours in these Letters, and calculated to answer a similar purpose. As it is a *state business*, it may be sufficient to give a *state answer* to it, and therefore, without examining into the history of what passed in the reign of Charles the Second, I shall content myself with copying what Mr. Emlyn said in answer to it, which is as follows:

"As to your rarity of the address to the Moroccan ambassador, I see not what it amounts to, more than a complaint of the corruption of the christian faith in the article of one God, which the Mahometans have kept by consent of all sides. Yet for as much as I can learn nothing from any unitarians of any such ad-

“ dress from them, nor do you produce any subscribers names, I conclude no such address was ever made by any deputed from them, whatever any single person might do. I suppose you conclude from the *matter* of it, that it must be from some unitarian, and perhaps so; yet you may remember that so you concluded from the matter of Dr. Tillotson’s sermons, that they were a Socinian’s.” Emlyn’s Work, vol. II. p. 93.

After being represented as having made near approaches to Mahometanism, I cannot be surprized that you should seem to insinuate that I am an unbeliever in christianity. For certainly I can be no less, if what you say, p. 106. be true. “ With your notion of inspiration, you are at liberty to dispute what the inspired apostles taught.” Here is no exception made with respect to any thing that they taught, and even what they taught from inspiration. I do not personally require any acknowledgment for these gross misrepresentations, but the Public, whom you have imposed upon, have a right to demand it of you.

Your endeavour to shew the little value of christianity on the unitarian principles, besides shewing your disposition to calumniate, discovers equal ignorance both of the state of the world, and of the system of revelation. You talk, p. 154. of
“ sober

"sober deists, who rejecting revelation, acknowledge, however, the obligations of morality, believe a providence, and a future retribution. The whole difference between them and us," you make them say, "is that we believe the same things upon different evidence, you upon the testimony of a man, who you say, was raised up to preach these truths; we upon the evidence of reason, which we think a higher evidence than any human testimony," &c.

I wish, Sir, you would produce a few of these *sober deists*. I think I am acquainted with as many unbelievers as you are; but whatever may have been the case formerly, I know no such persons at present as you describe; i. e. unbelievers who have a serious expectation of a future life. We may see from fact, that the arguments from reason alone, are unable to make any lasting impression on the minds of those who can resist the much plainer evidences of christianity; which, being of the historical kind, are much better adapted to carry conviction to the mind.

The present state of things furnishes an abundant proof that it is by the gospel alone, that life and immortality are fully brought to light. This gives the most satisfactory of all evidence of a future life, such as we see can really influence the heart and the life; such as can controul the strongest passions of the human breast, and give

men a manifest superiority of mind to the world and all the pleasures and pains of it.

To imagine, as you do, that the arguments for a future life from *reason alone*, that is, from appearances in the common course of nature, are at all comparable to the evidence that results from the gospel history, and especially from the death and resurrection of Christ (a man like ourselves; and therefore, the most proper pattern of a future universal resurrection) discovers such a want of real discernment and judgment, and such ignorance of human nature, as I will venture to say, are no where more conspicuous than in these letters of yours.

Your representation of the doctrine of *materialism* as favourable to *atheism*, only shews your ignorance of the system that you wish to expose, as indeed what you dropped on the subject of *ideas*, p. 113. sufficiently shewed before. But upon this I have said so much (more I suppose than you will ever take the trouble to read) in my *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*, that I shall not reply to such trite and idle reasoning as yours here.

What you say on the subject of the *resurrection*, if it has any weight at all, affects the christian doctrine, as taught by St. Paul. "The hope which you hold out," you say, p. 156 "of a resurrection, he" (the unbeliever) "will tell
" you

"you is no hope at all, even admitting that the
 "evidence of the thing could, upon your prin-
 "ciples, be indisputable. The atoms which
 "compose *me*; your atheist will say, may indeed
 "have composed a man before, and may again;
 "but *me* they will never more compose, when
 "once the present *me* is dissipated. I have no
 "no recollection of a former, and no concern
 "about a future self."

This might have been copied from the writings of the heathen philosophers against christianity. For if, as I have already intimated, there be any force in the objection, it will operate against the doctrine of a resurrection universally considered. Because, if the thing that dies (and it is the body only that is ever said to die) do not rise, and come to life again, there is no proper resurrection at all.

Whatever hope of a future life you may build on the Platonic doctrine of a *soul*, it is, I will venture to say, universally abandoned by the philosophical unbelievers of the present age; and, therefore, with respect to them, you can never establish any hope of a future life at all on any other principles than those *purely christian ones* which you endeavour to expose; and whatever difficulties may attend the consideration of it, they will all vanish, even to the philosophical mind, before the certain promise of that great
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being who made us and all things. If we once believe that *he* has given us this assurance, we can never suppose that he will be at a loss for proper means to accomplish his end; and if the gospel history be true, we have this assurance. But from natural appearances we have no evidence whatever of any thing belonging to man that can subsist, feel, and act, when the body is in the grave. And what I maintain is, that we must depart from all the known rules of philosophizing, before we can conclude that any such thing belongs to man.

From the same mode of reasoning by which we can prove that there is an immaterial principle in *man*, we may also prove that there is such a principle not only in a *brute*, or a *plant*, but even in a *magnet*, and the most inanimate parts of nature. For even the most inanimate parts of nature are possessed of *powers*, or *properties*, between which and what we see and feel of them, we are not able to perceive any connexion whatever. There is just as much connexion between the principles of *sensation* and *thought* and the brain of a man, as between the powers of a magnet and the iron of which it is made, or between the principle of gravitation and the matter of which the earth and the sun are made; and whenever you shall be able to deduce the powers of a magnet from the other properties of iron, you may perhaps be able to deduce the powers of sensation

and thought from the other properties of the brain. But to you, Sir, the whole of this subject is absolutely *terra incognita*. I perceive no traces of your being much *at home*, as you pretend, in the Greek language, but here you are a perfect stranger.

You are pleased to supply unbelievers with objections to revelation on the views that I have given of it; but I can produce numbers who will tell you, that such christianity as yours, including the belief of three persons in one God, is a thing absolutely incapable of proof, and who have actually rejected it on account of this doctrine, which they consider as so palpable an *absurdity*, and *contradiction*, as not even miracles can make credible.

I am, &c.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

Of Bishop Bull's Defence of damnatory Clauses.

REV. SIR,

IN this Letter I shall exhibit a curious specimen of your peculiar mode of controversial writing, and the advantage you take of the most trifling oversights in your opponents.

You gave the highest encomiums to the works of Bishop Bull, without any qualification or distinction, and recommended them to your clergy, as an infallible guide in every thing relating to the subject of our controversy. On this I said, "As you recommend the writings of Bishop Bull without exception, I presume that you approve of his defence of the damnatory clause in the Athanasian creed. Indeed you mentioned it among his most valuable works." When I wrote this, I did not, to be sure, look into the title-page of the book, in order to copy the very words of it; but no person could have any doubt which of Bishop Bull's treatises I really meant, as what I said sufficiently characterized it. And though he does not mention the Athanasian creed in particular, he defends every thing that is harsh and severe in the treatment of unitarians

unitarians by the orthodox in the primitive times, and particularly the anathema annexed to the Nicene creed.

On this subject, however, you write as follows, p. 165. "Sir, did you write this in your sleep, or is it in a dream only that I seem to read it. Bishop Bull's defence of the damnatory clause! From you, Sir, I have now my first information that Bishop Bull ever wrote upon the subject." Then, enumerating the titles of his works, you add, p. 167. "In these treatises there is no defence of the damnatory clause, nor, that I recollect, any mention of the Athanasian creed. There is no defence of the damnatory clause in the Sermons and English Tracts, published by Mr. Nelson, nor can I find any such tract mentioned by Mr. Nelson among the Bishop's lost works; for many small pieces, which it was known he had written, were never found after his death. Where have I mentioned, Sir, with such high approbation a work which I declare I have never seen, and of which, you will forgive me, if I still doubt the existence?"

Notwithstanding this ridiculous parade, which hath helped to swell out your book, you might just as well have said, that I never wrote an Answer to your *Charge*, merely because I called my work *Letters to Dr. Horsley*; and I will engage, that whatever doubt you might have had, if you had given an order to any bookseller in London

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in the very words that I used, he would have sent you the *Judicium*, &c. i. e. *The Judgment of the Catholic Church in the three first Centuries, concerning the Necessity of believing that our Lord Jesus Christ is the true God*. Now, Sir, what is implied in the *necessity of believing*, but the condemnation of those who do not believe? The whole truth, and the occasion of all this lamentable outcry is, that, not having the book before me at the time, I said *the damnatory clause in the Athanasian creed*, instead of the *anathema annexed to the Nicene creed*, a thing of exactly the same nature.

Besides, from your account, one would imagine that, as you declare *yourself* no lover of damnatory clauses, this good bishop, whose writings you so much recommend, was no more a friend to them than yourself, but that he might be the meekest and most candid of all christians. To give a specimen, therefore, of this most excellent prelate's writings, I shall produce a few passages from the preface of this particular work, from which a judgment may be formed of the *object* and *spirit* of the whole.

Giving a reason for this publication, he says,
 " There have appeared a few years ago in Eng-
 " land, many writings of wicked men, who have
 " laboured with all their might to overturn the
 " capital article of our creed, on which the hinge
 " of christianity certainly turns, namely, con-
 " cerning the Son of God, born of God the Fa-
 " ther himself before all ages, very God of very
 " God,

"God, by whom all things were made; who for
 "our salvation was incarnate, and made man;
 "some of them impudently defending the Arian,
 "and some the Samosatzenian blasphemy*."

He then quotes with approbation, a passage from Zanchius, in which he calls the writings of the unitarians *idle ravings, inepta deliria*; and afterwards speaking of Episcopius, and others, who though orthodox themselves, pleaded for some moderation towards these erring brethren, he calls it "an attempt to reconcile Christ and Belial," and adds, "These men, professing to hold and believe with the catholics (in which I wish they were sincere) in the truth of the article concerning the co-essential Son of God, yet do not acknowledge the necessity of it†." Then, with respect to their maintaining that the christian Fathers had the same moderation, he says, "It is throwing the greatest reproach upon the doctors, bishops, confessors, and martyrs of the best ages; as if in defending the

* Prodiere in Anglia nostra, intra paucos abhinc annos, scripta, non pauca hominum nefariorum, qui dogma fidei nostræ *κρίσις* τοῦ, in quo certe christianismi cardo vertitur (de filio nempe dei ante omnia secula, ex ipso deo patre, nato, vero deo de vero deo, per quem omnia condita fuere, nostræ salutis causa incarnato, homineque facto) labefactare atque evertere omni ope adnisi sunt; eorum aliis Arianam, aliis vero Samosatzenianam blasphemiam impudenter propugnantes.

† Hi homines, cum veritatem articuli de co-essentia dei filio cum catholicis se tenere atque credere profitantur (utinam sincere) ejusdem tamen necessitatem minime agnoscunt.

"greatest

“greatest of all the articles of the christian religion,
 “they were lukewarm, yea, absolutely cold;—
 “whereas all those churches with one voice and
 “judgment condemned the Arian and Socinian
 “doctrine, as a most pernicious and deadly heresy*.”

He farther says that, as in his former works he had defended the *Nicene creed itself*, so in this, “he maintains and defends the *anathema annexed to it*, viz. “those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, that he did not exist before he was born, and that he was made out of nothing, or out of any other hypostasis or substance, that he was either created, or subject to change or alteration, the catholic and apostolic church anathematizes †.”

He concludes the preface with saying, “This judgment of the universal church of Christ, in all times, all pious and sober minded persons will reverence; and therefore will be upon their guard

* Adeoque consequenter optimorum sæculorum doctoribus, episcopis, confessoribus, martyribus, gravissimam imposuerit contumeliam; quasi scilicet, in tutando capite religionis christianæ omnium maximo, tepidi, imo prorsus frigidi fuissent.— Quam ecclesiæ illæ omnes ut hæresin perniciosissimam ac *θανάτηφορον* consentienti calculo ac judicio damnaverunt.

† In hoc opusculo *αναθεματίζον* symbolo isto annumeramur ac defendimus—*τις δὲ λόγους ηὐτοῦ ὅτι καὶ ἡ, καὶ πρὶν γεννηθῆναι καὶ ἡ, καὶ ἐξ καὶ οὐκ ὄντων ἐγενετο, ἢ ἐξ ἑτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ ἑσίας φασκεύας εἶναι, ἢ χίλιον, ἢ τριῶν, ἢ ἀλλοιωτὸν τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ, τῶν ἀναθεματίζεσθαι ἢ καθολικῇ καὶ ἀποστολικῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ.*

“against,

"against, and with all their souls abhor, the God
"denying heresy of both the Somosatenians and the
"Arians*."

I need not, surely, go any farther into a work of
which this is the preface. I am tempted, however,
to quote, the form in which the bishop closes this
work, viz. "To the most holy and undivided
"Trinity, to God the Father, and to his co-essen-
"tial and co-eternal word, and Son, for our salva-
"tion made incarnate, together with the Holy
"Spirit the comforter, be all praise, honour and
"and glory, from angels and men, for ever and
"ever amen†."

Can you read all this, Sir, and not acknowledge
that Bishop Bull was a friend to damnatory clauses;
and if you be not so yourself, as you say you are
not, how came you to recommend the writings
of this fiery bishop so unreservedly as you have
done? and indeed, how can you be a true member
of that church which gives its sanction to these
damnatory clauses. Those damnatory clauses are as
much an article of faith in the church of England,

* Hoc judicium ecclesiæ Christi universalis omnium tem-
porum revere buntur certè pii ac sobrii omnes, adeoque ab
apostatis Samosatenianorum simul et Arianorum hæresi
cavebunt sibi, totoque animo abhorrebunt.

† Sanctissimæ atque individue trinitati, Deo patri, co-essen-
tiali et coeterno verbo ac filio, nostræ salutis causa incarnato,
una cum Spiritu sancto paracleta, ab angelis et hominibus tri-
buatur laus, honos, et gloria omnis in secula seculorum,
Amen.

as any of the *thirty-nine*, and he that does not *bona fide* maintain them, ought, in my opinion, to quit her communion. You, Sir, therefore, either do, or ought to believe, that myself and all who think as I do, shall *without doubt perish everlastingly*. If you cannot say *amen* to this *curse*, you have no business where you are, and certainly ought not to pronounce it. For this, your Athanasian creed asserts, and I suppose no *figure* was intended by the devout composer of it.

The first time that Bishop Bull's writings were recommended to me, was by a popish priest, in whose company I passed several days at Brussels, who took serious pains to make me a Roman catholic, and afterwards wrote to me very earnestly on the subject. But paying too little attention to the recommendation, I was unacquainted with the real character and value of this writer, till it was enforced by the archdeacon of St. Albans.

I am, &c.

LETTER

L E T T E R X V I I .

Of the Light in which the Dissenters are considered by the Archdeacon of St. Albans, and of the Penalties to which the Unitarians among them are subject.

REV. SIR,

THOUGH you profess yourself to be *no lover of damnatory clauses*, p. 165. and now and then are pleased to drop some obliging expressions of respect for dissenters, it is, however, with a considerable mixture of contempt, and with an intimation that we unitarian dissenters (and all unitarians, we both agree, either are, or ought to be dissenters in this country) are subject to many pains and penalties, as the laws now stand. With what view you threw out those hints, and so particularly recite those acts of parliament to the penalties of which we are obnoxious, is best known to yourself, and time will perhaps discover.

I had complained of the contempt with which you mentioned the places of worship among dissenters, when you called them *conventicles*. In your present publication, after something of an
N apology

apology for using that word, which I think awkward enough, you do not perhaps much mend the matter, by saying, p. 167. "I could have wished that the use of it had been considered as one of the mere archaisms of my style, in which nothing of insult was intended. I must, however, declare, that it would give me particular pleasure to receive conviction that Mr. Lindsey's Meeting-house, and your own, are not more emphatically conventicles in your own sense, that is, in the worst sense of the word. From personal respect for you and him, I should be happy to be assured that you stand not within the danger of the 35th of Eliz. ch. i. or the 17th Ch. II. c. ii. to the penalties of which, and of other statutes, I must take the liberty to tell you, you are obnoxious, notwithstanding the late act of the 19th of his present Majesty in favour of dissenters, unless at the general or quarter sessions of the peace for the county where you live, you have made a certain declaration, which is required by that act, instead of the subscription to articles required by the former acts of toleration. I am sorry, Sir, to inform you, that I find no entry of Mr. Lindsey's declaration in the office of the clerk of the peace, either for the county of Middlesex, or the city of Westminster. Could I make the same enquiry concerning you (which the distance of your residence prevents) I fear I should have the mortification to find that

"that you have no more than your friend complied
 "with the laws from which you claim protection.
 "A report prevails that you both object to the de-
 "claration from conscientious scruples, a very suffi-
 "cient excuse for not making it: but no excuse at
 "all for doing what the law allows not to be done,
 "except upon the express condition that the decla-
 "ration be previously made."

You afterwards say, p. 169. "your meeting-
 "house and his, contrary to your imagination, are
 "illegal, unknown to the laws, and unprotected by
 "them."

Here, Sir, it is you, and not we, who are mistaken.
 Both our *conventicles*, you will find, are protected,
 though we ourselves are not. The consequence,
 therefore, of any prosecution of me (if any person,
 taking the hint from you, should proceed to it)
 would be the depriving of the dissenters belonging
 to the New-Meeting at Birmingham of one of their
 present pastors; but the *Meeting-house* would re-
 main under the protection of the law, as much as
 any of your parish churches, which owe all their
 consideration to the same law; and would not pre-
 vent their chusing another minister, who, if he had
 more caution than myself, might defy your malice;
 but the congregation that I serve, would think
 themselves disgraced by a minister of that timid
 character.

As you were so very desirous of getting information concerning my conduct in this business, I wonder that you should not have been able to find some person in this neighbourhood like-minded with yourself, to make the enquiry for you. However, I will save you and your friends that trouble, and perhaps some small expence, by informing you, that, as I never made the *subscription* required of all dissenters before the late act, so neither have I made the *declaration* which that act makes necessary to my legal toleration, nor have I at present any intention to do it.

I shall farther inform you, and our readers, that when it was first proposed in *the general body of dissenting ministers in or near London* (of which, as I then resided pretty much in London, I was a member) whether we should desire our friends in parliament to promote the passing of the bill or not, I was one of those who voted for our continuing in our former situation; but we were over-ruled by a very great majority. The reason for my voting in this manner was, I believe, peculiar to myself. I observed, that I had not, on my own account, any objection to make the declaration proposed in that bill, with the exception of a single circumstance which I then mentioned, and which we all agreed had better be omitted, and which accordingly was struck out before the bill passed into a law. But I said that I perceived that many persons, for whom I had the greatest respect, had their serious scruples, and such

as it was probable they would not be able to overcome; and I thought that the passing of the law, and especially a general compliance with it, would make them more noticed, and perhaps bring them into trouble; whereas, the requisitions of the former law were so unreasonable, that though few, if any of us, had complied with them, it did not appear that any body would ever molest us on that account. For the same reason that I did not then wish for the law to pass, I do not now chuse unnecessarily to avail myself of it.

But with respect to myself, and many others, the thing is of little consequence. There are laws enow in this country from the penalties of which the late act would not exempt us. In this happy land of religious liberty and toleration, I am liable, at any time, and without any offence of a civil nature, to have all my goods confiscated, and to be imprisoned for life. But though I think these laws most absurd and unreasonable, and that, as a man who has not disturbed the peace of his neighbours, I am entitled to all the rights of other citizens; so that I neither ought to be molested on account of my own religion, nor compelled to contribute to the support of that of another person, any more than to pay his physician; I think myself happy, considering how much more unfriendly to truth civil governments and civil governors have been, that I am not exposed to all the difficulties and hazards that the apostles were exposed to; and when I cannot obtain

tain a legal *toleration*, I am very thankful for a *connivance*.

You say, p. 168, that "conscientious scruples" are no excuse at all for doing what the law "allows not to be done." In this you totally mistake the ground of my conduct. I do not pretend that it is authorized by the laws of this, or of any country. It is enough for me if I think myself justified by the *laws of God*; and whether I ought to *obey God, or man*, in this case, do you yourself judge.

What would you yourself advise us unitarians in this country to do? We have heard again and again all that you have to say in defence of your trinitarian notions, and trinitarian worship, without any approach towards conviction, and yet we think it our duty to make a public profession of our unitarian principles, and to adopt an unitarian form of worship. Would you seriously say we ought, with the views of things that we really have, to keep our opinions to ourselves, and have no public worship at all? And yet between this conduct and our acting more or less openly in opposition to you, and incurring the penalties of the laws now in force against us, there is no medium.

If you really be a friend to any thing that deserves the name of *toleration*, you must feel for the
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the disgrace of your country, on account of the unjust and impolitic restraints the laws of it lay upon us, and you will use your endeavours to promote the repeal of *all penal laws in matters of religion*, and likewise to lay open all civil offices to all persons who are qualified to fill them; which indeed, is no more than is already done in several countries in Europe. That those who prefer the mode of religion now established, should bear the whole expence of it, without compelling us to assist them in it, while they do nothing for ours in return, though a thing perfectly reasonable, is more than I expect the archdeacon of St. Albans to countenance. I, however, live in the firm belief that even this will take place some time or other; and my belief is grounded on this general and glorious truth, that there is a wise and good being at the head of all affairs, bringing good out of all evil. I therefore believe that good will finally take place of all evil, and consequently, equity of injustice.

You Sir, as Archdeacon of St. Albans, may believe that the church of England will continue to the end of the world, and that *all nations* (at least all that speak the English language, and can read the book of Common Prayer in the original) *will flow into it*. On the other hand, it is my firm persuasion, that when *Babylon the great, the mother of harlots*, shall fall, all her daughters, all the *little Babylons*, all the *lesser establishments*, of what I deem

to be corrupt christianity, will fall with her, or soon after her; and therefore I apply to them, as well as to the church of Rome, that awful warning, Rev. xviii. 4. *Come out of her my people, that ye partake not of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

While we unitarians behave as good subjects (and I do not know that we are worse thought of than other dissenters in this respect) I have such confidence in the good sense of my countrymen, though without any particular obligation to yourself on this account, and in the spirit of the times (which throughout all Europe is daily more favourable to freedom of enquiry and toleration, and less favourable to old and corrupt, though venerable establishments) that I have little doubt but that I shall be suffered to proceed as I have hitherto done, unmolested, promoting by every means in my power, what I deem to be important *truth*, though our legislators in the last century voted it to be *heresy* and *blasphemy*. What our present legislative body, if the question was brought before them, would decree, is unknown; but I am pretty confident that when the subject shall come properly before them (and this may be pretty soon) they will be disposed to hear reason, and to do justice.

From what you say of your own freedom of enquiry, one would think that you might have treated us dissenters with a little more respect. - For after observing that you are *much at home in the Greek language,*

language, and that you have read the ecclesiastical historians, you add, p. 163. "I had been many years in the habits of thinking for myself upon a variety of subjects, before I opened Dr. Clarke's book. There is in most men a culpable timidity; you and I perhaps have overcome that general infirmity, but there is in most men a culpable timidity, which inclines them to be easily over-awed by the authority of great names." It will make some persons smile to see you, Sir, group yourself with me upon this occasion, and they may ask for similar evidence of your having overcome this culpable timidity, and of your having really thought for yourself, when they see you professing to believe, and complying with every thing that those who do not think for themselves at all, profess to believe and comply with. Your profound admiration of Bishop Bull's writings is no proof of your thinking for yourself. All that can be inferred from it is, that you have made a wise choice of masters. The writer for whom I always profess the greatest admiration is Dr. Hartley, but I differ from him in many things, and things also of great consequence.

If however, you still retain the habit of thinking for yourself, allow me to return your civility to me, when you joined my name, p. 161. to those of *Bolingbroke*, *Voltaire*, and *Gibbon*, by adding yours also to this list of *free enquirers*, and your sentence will then close thus, *a Gibbon, a Priestley, or a Horsley.*

For

For my own part, I cannot say that I much dislike my situation, in the light in which I view the different characters; since I find myself placed between an *unbeliever* on the one hand, and a *high churchman* on the other. *Medio tutissimus ibis.*

I am, &c.

LETTER XVIII.

Of the Charge of wilful Misrepresentation, &c.

REV. SIR,

AS both yourself, and your *great and good ally*, Mr. Badcock, have employed so much of your respective publications on the subject of *perversions, wilful misrepresentations, artifice, management, &c. &c. &c.* (for you are at no loss for words or phrases of this import) it may not be improper to give you one short letter on that subject.

I was willing to hope, that, in this second publication, you would have observed the rules of decency, and of probability, in your charges against me, and that you might have expressed some little concern for your former violations of them.

them. But I am sorry to find, that instead of retracting any thing, you have considerably added to your offences of this kind. You had before charged me with knowingly misquoting the English translation of the Bible, when, in fact, I should not have gained any thing by it. You now talk, p. 5. of my designedly omitting a significant adjective, as you say, in a quotation from Athanasius, when I neither intended to quote, nor to translate the passage, but only referred to, and gave the general sense of it; and this, I doubt not was the true one. Yet upon this you raise loud exclamations, concerning *truth, candour, consistency, and dealing in sarcasms.*

You also think, with Mr. Badcock, that I really meant to conceal from the unlearned part of a quotation from Justin Martyr, which I printed in Greek at full length, and this in a public controversy with yourself, of whose vigilance in this respect I could not entertain a doubt. "The entire passage," you say, p. 83. "as long as it appears not in your translation, lay innocently enough in the Greek, at the bottom of your page." But I must have been an *idiot* indeed in plain English, and something worse than the *idiot* of Tertullian, as well as the *homo nefarius* of Bishop Bull, to have attempted a deception in these circumstances.

As, in another place, you speak more fully on the subject of my artifice and insincerity,
enlarge

enlarge upon the nature of it, and the degree of its guilt in controversial writings, I shall produce the passage at length, and then give a general answer to it.

“Indeed, Sir,” you say, p. 159. “in quoting
 “ancient authors when you have understood the
 “original, which in many instances is not the
 “the case, you have too often been guilty of
 “much reserve and management. This ap-
 “pears in some instances, in which you cannot
 “pretend, that your own inadvertency, or your
 “printer’s, hath given occasion to unmerited im-
 “putations. I wish that my complaints upon this
 “head had been groundless : but in justice to my
 “own cause, I could not suffer unfair quotations
 “to pass undetected. God forbid that I should
 “draw any conclusion from this unseemly prac-
 “tice, against the general probity of your cha-
 “racter. But you will allow me to lament that
 “men of integrity, in the service of what they
 “think a good end, should indulge themselves
 “so freely as they often do in the use of unjusti-
 “fiable means. Time was, when the practice
 “was openly avowed, and Origen himself was
 “among its defenders. The art which he re-
 “commended, he scrupled not to employ. I
 “have produced an instance, in which, to silence
 “an adversary, he hath recourse to the wilful
 “and deliberate allegation of a notorious fal-
 “hood. You have gone no such length as this.
 “I think you may believe me sincere, when I
 “speak

“ speak respectfully of your worth and integrity,
 “ notwithstanding that I find occasion to charge
 “ you with some degree of blame, in a sort in
 “ which the great character of Origen was more
 “ deeply infected. Would to God it had been
 “ otherwise. Would to God I could with truth
 “ have boasted ‘ To these low arts stooped Origen,
 “ but my contemporary, my great antagonist, dis-
 “ dains them.’ How would it have heightened
 “ the pride of victory, could I have found a fair
 “ occasion to be thus the herald of my adversaries
 “ praise.”

All these, Sir, and such like charges of artful,
 and therefore highly criminal misrepresentation (for
 they cannot amount to any thing less, notwith-
 standing all your qualifying clauses) which you
 and Mr. Badcock are perpetually urging, are in
 their own nature, too absurd to gain any credit,
 and therefore can only shew that what you want in
argument, you are willing to make up some other
 way. I have completely vindicated the character
 of Origen, which you have endeavoured to blot;
 and as to *myself*, you are quite at liberty to think
 of me just as you please. I am not conscious of
 any unfairness whatever in any part of my proceed-
 ings, but have a perfect willingness to bring before
 the public every thing that may enable them to
 form a true judgment on the subject of this con-
 troversy. If I knew of any circumstance favour-
 able to your argument, I would produce it as
 readily as I should do any thing in favour of my
 own;

own; and I am as willing to detect my own mistakes, as you, or any person, can be to do it for me. For this I appeal to the tenor of all my writings, and to my general character, which I will venture to say is as fair as yours.

You are pleased, indeed, to balance the account of my wilful misrepresentations, &c. with an allowance for the *general probity of my character*, p. 160. and a *cordial esteem and affection for the virtues of it*, which, you say, *are great and amiable*. What you know of my private character I cannot tell; but I suppose not much; and I shall not attempt to balance your account in the same manner; for really of your private character, I know but little, either good or evil; and therefore I presume the former, though the liberties you have taken as a *writer* are not very favourable to that presumption. But this kind of apology is absurd; and had I thought you, or Mr. Badcock, capable of the things with which you charge me, I should not say that “your virtues were either great, or “amiable.”

By way of softening those charges, which materially affect my *moral character*, you sometimes (though it makes a poor compensation for defects of a moral nature) introduce compliments (whether sincerely or ironically is equally indifferent to me) respecting *merit of a philosophical kind*. These also, for want of information, I am unable to return. For if I were asked what improvements

in science the world owes to you, I really could not tell; and I think it is very possible, that, in fact, you are as much a stranger to my pursuits, as I am to yours. By this I do not mean to insinuate that you have no merit as a *mathematician*, to which you make high pretensions; but though for some years I applied pretty closely to the study of pure mathematics, and was thought to have made some proficiency in them, it was when I had not the means of employing my time as I now do, so that I give but little attention to those matters. Whatever may be the case with you, I find that if I particularly cultivate one branch of knowledge, it must be at the expence of others. I have therefore made my choice of the different objects of pursuit, and shall hardly change it now, except, as I get older, to circumscribe my studies still more.

If any thing would justify a retort of such charges of unfairness, it would be your readiness, upon every slight occasion, to bring them against me. For we do not easily suspect others of what we feel we are incapable of ourselves. But as I am conscious of the utmost fairness in my own conduct, I cannot lightly believe the contrary of others.

As I observed to Mr. Venn, in the first theological controversy in which I engaged, p. 9. "It behoves us carefully to distinguish between a *latent insincerity*" (the nature and causes of which I there explain) "under the influence of which
" men

“ men deceive themselves, and that *direct* *prev-*
“ *rication*, with which those who are engaged in
“ debate are too ready to charge one another, as
“ if their adversaries knowingly concealed, or op-
“ posed the truth. This is a crime of so heinous
“ a nature, that I should be very unwilling to
“ impute it to any person whatever.” I am
therefore unwilling to charge it on you, or Mr.
Badcock, notwithstanding some appearances might
seem to justify me in it.

I am the most puzzled to account for the strange
and improbable history that you, Sir, have given
of a church of orthodox Jews at Jerusalem, after
the time of Adrian, and the series of historical
facts, as you have the assurance to call them, for
which it is not possible that you should have any
authority, in ancient or even in modern writers ;
and yet had you yourself been present at the sur-
render of the place, and had drawn up the terms
of capitulation, you could not have given a more
distinct and positive account. But the fact, I be-
lieve, was, that, without any examination of your
own, you took it for granted, from the authority
of Mosheim (who had no authority for it himself)
that one leading circumstance was true, and then
concluded that the other circumstances, which you
have added, and therefore *knew* that you added,
must have been so too. On this you have not hesi-
tated to relate the whole in one continued *narra-*
tive, just as if you had been copying from some
historian of the time ; and Origen, who lived in those
times,

times, and in the very country, and whose veracity was never questioned before, is treated, without ceremony, as a *wilful liar*, because he has given a different account of things.

As it has been very much my object to trace *effects* to their *causes*, and I consider the human mind, and consequently all human actions, to be subject to *laws*, as regular as those which operate in my laboratory (for want of knowing or attending to which Mr. Gibbon has egregiously failed in his account of the causes of the spread of christianity, and you in this controversy) I had framed an hypothesis to account for Mr. Badcock's censure of what I said concerning Eusebius; but not being quite satisfied with it, I rejected it. However, notwithstanding strong appearances, I am still willing to hope, that the misrepresentation, though exceedingly gross, was not directly wilful.

I am, &c.

Q LETTER

LETTER XIX.

Miscellaneous articles, and the Conclusion.

REV. SIR,

DISPOSED as you are to make the most of every trifling oversight that you can discover in my *History*, and of every concession that I make to you, I still have no objection to acknowledge any *real mistake* that I have fallen into, important or unimportant; and I shall certainly correct all such in any future edition of my work; and likewise, as far as I am able, in the translations that are making of it into foreign languages. I shall now make *two* acknowledgments, and let our readers judge of their importance; and how little my *History* loses for want of being perfectly correct in those particulars.

I had said that “Valesius was of opinion that the history of Hegesippus was neglected and lost, because it was observed to favour the unitarian doctrine,” whereas I should have said, “on account of the errors which it contained, and that those errors could not be supposed to be any other than those of the unitarians;” and if I had consulted the passage at the time, I certainly should have expressed myself in that more cautious manner.

But

But of what consequence is this circumstance to my great argument? Mr. Badcock, having looked for the passage to which I refer, and not being able to find it, seems to have imagined that I had no such passage to produce. He therefore after his insolent manner, challenges me to produce it, and to *put him to shame*. That I believe to be impossible, otherwise it would have been effectually done in my *Remarks on the Monthly Review*; at least, by my notice of his most shameful conduct with respect to my censure of Eusebius, p. 21, of which he says nothing at all in his *Letter to me*. I suppose he thought it *not to be regarded*. However the passage which I refer to, and which sufficiently answers my purpose, is as follows: "Moreover, those books of Clement contained a short and compendious exposition of both the testaments, as Photius in his *Bibliotheca* witnesses; but on account of the errors with which they abounded, being negligently kept, they were at length lost; nor was there any other reason, in my opinion, why the books of Papias, Hegesippus, and others of the ancients are now lost*."

You, Sir, however have observed this passage, and you say, p. 4. "Valesius has indeed ex-

* Porro ii Clementis libri continebant brevem & compendiarum utriusque testamenti expositionem, ut testatur Photius in Bibliotheca. Ob errores autem quibus scatebant, negligentius habiti, tandem perierunt. Nec alia, meo quidem iudicio, causa est, cur Papiæ & Hegesippi, aliorumque veterum libri, interciderint. In Euseb. Hist. Lib. v. cap. 11.

" pressed an opinion that the work of Hegesippus
 " was neglected by the ancients, on account of
 " errors which it contained. But what the errors
 " might be which might occasion this neglect is
 " a point upon which Valesius is silent. And
 " what right have you to suppose that the unita-
 " rian doctrine was the error which Valesius
 " ascribed to Hegesippus more than to Clemens
 " Alexandrinus, upon whose last work of the
 " Hypotyposes he passes the same judgment."

I answer, that there were no errors of any con-
 sequence ascribed to that early age besides those of
 the Gnostics, and of the unitarians. The former
 certainly were not those that Valesius could allude
 to with respect to Hegesippus, because this writer
 mentions the Gnostics very particularly as heretics,
 but makes no mention of unitarians at all; though
 they certainly existed, and I doubt not constituted
 the great body of unlearned christians in his time;
 which is one circumstance that, together with his
 being a *Jewish christian* (all of whom are expressly
 said to have been Ebionites, and none of them
 to have believed the divinity of Christ) leads
 me to conclude that he was an unitarian himself.
 Though Clemens Alexandrinus was not an unita-
 rian, yet he never calls unitarians *heretics*; and
 since in his accounts of *heretics in general*, which
 are pretty frequent in his works, he evidently means
 the *Gnostics only*, and therefore virtually excludes
 unitarians from that description of men; it is by no
 means improbable but that, in those writings of
 his

his which are lost, he might have said things directly in favour of unitarians.

In this passage Valesius also mentions the writings of Papias, as having, in his opinion, been lost for the same reason. Now Papias has certainly been supposed to be an Ebionite. Mr. Whiston has made this very probable from a variety of circumstances. See his *Account of the ceasing of miracles*, p. 18. In the same tract he gives his reasons for supposing Hegesippus to have been an Ebionite, and he expresses his wonder, "that he should have had the good fortune to be so long esteemed by the learned for a catholic," p. 21, &c. In this Mr. Whiston may be supposed to have been sufficiently impartial, as he was an Arian, and expresses great dislike of the Ebionites; as, indeed, Arians always have done.

I also acknowledge that I ought not to have exempted Epiphanius (as you have observed, p. 4. though with more severity than the case required) from the impropriety of charging Noetus with being a Patripassian. But this also is a circumstance of as little consequence to the main argument as the former, though my negligence with respect to it, I frankly own, was greater. I had myself discovered the mistake, and should have corrected it, if your Letters to me had never appeared. That the Patripassian notion was injuriously charged upon the unitarians of antiquity is sufficiently shewn by Beausobre, who was him-

self a trinitarian, and a man of learning if ever there was one. This charge was so common that, without any proper evidence whatever, all the unitarians are called Patripassians by one writer or other. Optatus even says that Ebion, the supposed father of the Ebionites, was a Patripassian*, though no early writer who mentions the Ebionites says any such thing of them.

I must, however, acknowledge that you have one just cause of triumph over me, and all the friends of free enquiry; but this also, as with respect to every other advantage which you have gained, you exult in too much, and make too great account of. The *Monthly Review*, which was formerly in our favour, is now completely yours. Your *Charge*, which contains the highest *orthodoxy*, and discovers the greatest spirit of *church authority* of any production in this age, has been examined before that tribunal, and been honoured with an unqualified approbation. And as to your present publication, which has no less merit of the same kind, its praises, I doubt not, are already *sung*, or at least *set to music*, and the whole choir of Reviewers, who have been unanimous in their condemnation of me, are ready to join the chorus on this occasion.

You plead your right, p. 78. to make the most of this your new acquisition; and in this you think

* Ut Hebion qui argumentabatur patrem passum esse, non filium. Lib. iv. p. 91.

yourself

yourself justified by my conduct in the publication of small and cheap pamphlets, for the purpose of disseminating my principles among the lower and poorer class of people, though, in my opinion, the two cases are very different indeed. This post, however, which we were once in possession of, you and your friends have now got, and it is not to be supposed that you will ask our leave what use to make of it; so that we must yield with as good a grace as we can, and endeavour to make our ground good elsewhere.

II.

One of your curious proofs of my *ignorance*, and of my being entirely unqualified to write the *history of early times*, is my not being acquainted with the opinions of some *modern writers*, and those either difficult to procure, or such as could have been of little use to me, if I had known them. I acknowledged that I had not heard of D. Zuicker, I did not know what Episcopus, Petavius, or Huetius, thought on a particular subject, and I had not read your great authority, bishop Bull. "What is this," you say, p. 7. "but to confess that you are indeed little redde in the principal writers, either on your own side of the question or the opposite. But as no man, I presume, is born with an intuitive knowledge of the opinions, or the facts, of past ages, the historian of religious corruptions, confessing himself unredde in the *polemical* *divines*, confesses ignorance of his subject. You

“repel the imputation of *plagiarism* by the most disgraceful confession of *ignorance*, to which foiled polemic ever was reduced.”

Now the probability is, that my reading in polemical divinity is much more extensive than yours. But if it had been ten times greater than it is, I do not know whether, instead of being advantageous, it might not have been of disservice to me, in ascertaining the state of things in the early ages, to the knowledge of which these authors had no better access than myself. You yourself, I am pretty confident, have formed your opinions on these subjects chiefly from modern writers; and it has been by this means, and by the help of your fertile imagination, as I have shewn, that you have been so miserably misled as you have been.

III.

You and Mr. Badcock both pride yourselves in your knowledge of the Greek language, and you insult me, and my *Vindicator*, for our ignorance of it. But to criticize others is the easiest road to fame. In the same way you might set yourself up even against Casaubon, Scaliger, or Bently, to whom you acknowledge, p. 58, that you “stand bowing at a distance;” for the greatest scholars sometimes make great mistakes.

Out of the number of citations that I have made, is it extraordinary that two or three, and those

those of no great consequence, should have been found in some degree faulty? You and your ally have had no occasion to produce many, and writing in controversy, would naturally be more guarded; and yet your errors in this way far exceed mine. Concerning one of these, you say, p. 15. "the words are so very clear, that the sense was hardly to be missed at first sight, by a school boy in the second year of Greek." What, then, will be said of the man who can translate *idiota*, *idiot*, who can argue from *ἵνα* as necessarily referring to a *person* (for if this was not your meaning, it was impertinent to alledge it at all) and censure me for rendering *ὅτι οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν* by *to nothing but*? And what can you say in excuse for your learned ally translating *ἀλλὰ γὰρ καὶ ἄλλοι σποροί*, *others upon another plan*, instead of *some in one way and others in another*, on which he founds the most improbable and malignant of all his accusations against me, for *concealment*, *wilful perversion*, &c. &c. And what can you say for the apology he has made for his blunder, when he only allows that *the words may be more accurately rendered as I have done*; whereas, every person who is at all acquainted with Greek, must know that, in that connexion, and especially if the force of the particle *γὰρ* be attended to, the phrase will not bear any other rendering? A writer who assumes so much as he has done, and who has treated my *Vindicator*, on the subject of Greek, with a degree of insolence that exceeds any

any thing that I have met with, and yet has himself blundered in this manner, ought to *kiss the rod*, if not, without a figure, to *feel* it, and *take shame to himself*. His friends, however, if he have any, must blush for him.

Though from the age of seventeen to twenty-seven, I believe, I read as much Greek as almost any man can be supposed to have read in the same time, and after that taught it nine years, the last six of them at Warrington, and chiefly the higher Greek classics (for the elements of the language were not taught in that academy) I do not pretend ever to have been properly *at home* in the language. I mean so as to read it with the same ease, with which it is common to read Latin or French (indeed I have not yet met with any man who pretended that he could do this) and having given less attention to that language since I have had the means of employing my time better, your Scotch correspondent may be right in observing, p. 182, that *I am but very moderately skilled in it*, and at my time of life, my acquaintance with it is not likely to improve. However, such as it is, I shall make the best use that I can of it in the *larger work* on which I am now employed. It is possible, however, that I might make but a bad exchange of the remains of my Greek literature for yours, or that of your Scotch correspondent.

IV.

You are pleased to make some apology for your *haughty style*, and the contemptuous airs you gave yourself, both with respect to Dissenters, and to your own inferior Clergy. To what I observed on this subject, you now say, p. 158, "it might be a sufficient, and not an unbecoming reply, to remind you that I spoke *ex cathedra*, and hold myself accountable for the advice which I gave to no human judicature, except the King, the metropolitan, and my diocesan. This would indeed, be the only answer, which I should condescend to give to any one for whom I retained not, under all our differences, a very considerable degree of personal esteem. But as Dr. Priestley is my adversary, in some points I could wish to set him right, and in some I desire to explain."

A great part of this apology was, indeed, Sir, quite unnecessary, as no person can read your *Charge* and doubt your having delivered it *ex cathedra*. The inferior, the *far inferior* clergy, to whom it was addressed, were, I presume, fully sensible of it. The only question is, whether you ever think that you are not speaking *ex cathedra*. Please, however, to remember that I am not one of those to whom you have any right to speak in that manner, and that I do not hold myself accountable to any metropolitan, or diocesan, or even to the king, or any person or potentate on earth, in matters of religion. Also while
I have

I have "credit enough (p. 171.) to collect," or to find, "a congregation," I shall preach, without applying to your church, or the church of Rome, for *holy orders*; and I shall think my *conventicle* as reputable a place for preaching as any of your *churches*; though you, p. 169. think it *arrogant* in me to make the comparison between them.

V.

I can hardly believe that I am living in the close of the eighteenth century, when I read what you say in this publication concerning the *dignity and the power of the priesthood*, derived by *regular succession*, p. 171. from the apostles, and of course through the Popes, and find that you seriously disallow of my authority to exercise the sacred function, &c. As a curiosity, in the year 1784, I am tempted to give my reader a pretty long extract from your work, on this subject. After enumerating the mischiefs that you say, p. 170. you have seen in your own country, in the course of your own life, you add, "When I consider
 " that the root of all those evils has been the
 " prevalency of a principle, of which you seem
 " disposed to be an advocate, that every man
 " who has credit enough to collect a congregation
 " has a right, over which the magistrate cannot
 " without tyranny exercise controul; to celebrate
 " divine worship, according to his own form,
 " and to propagate his own opinions; I am inclined to be jealous of a principle which has
 " proved,

" proved, I had almost said, so ruinous; and I
 " lean the more to the opinion, that the com-
 " mission of a ministry, perpetuated by regular
 " succession, is something more than a dream of
 " cloystered gownsmen, or a tale imposed upon
 " the vulgar, to serve the ends of avarice and
 " ambition. For whatever confusion human folly
 " may admit, a divine institution must have within
 " itself a provision for harmony and order. And,
 " upon those principles, though I wish that all
 " indulgence should be shewn to tender consciences,
 " and will ever be an advocate for the largest to-
 " leration that may be consistent with political
 " wisdom (being indeed persuaded that the re-
 " straints of human laws must be used with the
 " greatest gentleness and moderation to be rendered
 " means of strengthening the bonds of christian
 " peace and amity) yet I could wish to plant a
 " principle of severe restraint in the consciences of
 " men. I could wish that the importance of the
 " ministerial office were considered, that the prac-
 " tice of antiquity were regarded, and that it might
 " not seem a matter of perfect indifference to the
 " laity, to what house of worship they resort. I
 " cannot admit that every assembly of grave and
 " virtuous men, in which grave and virtuous men
 " take upon them to officiate, is to be dignified
 " with the appellation of a *church*, &c.

That these doctrines, which will justify all the
 violence of the church of Rome, and which condemn
 the reformation, should be maintained by a protestant

divine at this day is rather extraordinary. I can almost fancy that the dial of Ahaz has once more gone back, and brought us to the time of Dr. Sacheverel, if not that of Archbishop Laud. But were I, in my turn, to make an enumeration of the complicated mischiefs that have arisen both to the cause of christianity, and the peace of society, from *church establishments* (but it would be digressing too far from the object of this controversy to do it) it would soon appear that it was high time that this boasted *alliance between the CHURCH and the STATE* was entirely broken; as it has proved infinitely injurious to both the contracting parties, though occasionally useful to those *churchmen* and *statesmen* who, to serve the purposes of their own ambition, had drawn the contract.

When I contemplate the dignity you assume as *Archdeacon*, and the high tone of your whole performance, superior to any thing *on my shelves*, I wonder that you should profess any respect for tender consciences at all. I find, however, that the respect you profess for dissenters, is only for those who are *favoured by the laws*; so that our obligations to you are not great; nor do you think there is any impropriety in the restraints of human laws in matters of religion, only you would have them used, p. 171. *with gentleness and moderation*. How far this gentleness and moderation would go, if you really thought the church in danger, I cannot tell. I am, therefore, happy that you are so easy on that account, as you represent yourself, p. 8.

You

You are pleased, however, though in no perfect consistence with what you say of the *powers of the priesthood*, as derived by succession from the apostles, to say, p. 161. "You will remember that I make the learning and the piety of her clergy, of which ample monuments are extant, the basis of her pre-eminence." I have no disposition to detract from the learning or the piety there may be among you; but as you celebrate your own praises, I will take the liberty to observe, that, allowance being made for your superior numbers, and superior advantages, with respect to conveniences for study, from which, by a policy as weak as it is illiberal, you exclude dissenters (thinking, perhaps, to make us despicable, by keeping us in ignorance) I do not think that the body of dissenting ministers, with all their disadvantages, need be afraid of a comparison with you; and candid persons among the clergy have acknowledged the benefit you have derived from us; not to say that you are indebted to us for some of your greatest ornaments, as Tillotson, Butler, and Secker.

In what you say of Dr. Chandler (whose infirmity, and I may add, whose² misfortune, it was to pay too much court to leading men, both in the church and in the state) viz. that he preferred the church of England to any other establishment of christianity, p. 161. it would be no great compliment from me, if I should say it after him. But I really cannot do it; and if I could adopt

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your

your idea of the transmission of the powers of the priesthood from the apostles, and was to conform to any establishment, I should chuse to be member of a much older and more venerable establishment than yours, and in which the claim to that valuable succession should be less liable to litigation.

As to yourself in particular, who are so proud of being a *churchman*, it would have been happy for the public, and likewise a particular satisfaction to myself, if you had had a greater share of that *learning* of which you think your church possessed. More information would then have been given to our readers by both of us; and at least I might have been able to say, with the person who examined Dr. Clarke, *Probe me exercitiis*. All I can now say is, that I have made some use of your *ignorance*, though I should have made more of your *knowledge*, to throw light on the subject of our discussion. My task has been much too easy, but I would willingly have done more, if there had been any occasion for it, or indeed a propriety in it.

I am, Sir,

Your very humble servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

BIRMINGHAM,
September, 1784.

APPENDIX.

A P P E N D I X.

The first of the following paragraphs, which was to have been the last of Letter VIII. p. 79, having been overlooked at the time of printing, I have thought proper to give it in this place, and to add to it all that follows.

ADMITTING that the apostles had taught any doctrines of a peculiarly sublime nature, and above the comprehension of ordinary christians; yet, as all their teaching was in public, and there were no *secrets* among them, nothing corresponding to the *mysteries* of the heathens, the common people must have heard of these sublime things, and have been accustomed to the sound of the language in which they were expressed; and they would have learned to respect what they could not understand. They could never have been *offended*, and *staggered* at things which they, and their fathers before them, had always been in the hearing of.

Besides, this argument for the novelty of the doctrine of the trinity from the *offence* that was
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given

given by it, in the time of Tertullian, when, as far as I can find, the common people first heard of it; that this class of persons were generally unitarians before, and even after, the council of Nice, appears pretty clearly from several circumstances in the history of those times. Besides, that we do not read of any of the *laity* being excommunicated along with Noetus, Paul of Samosata, or Photinus (though unitarians are acknowledged to have been in great numbers in their days, and to have been in communion with the catholic church) when the two last were deposed from their sees, the common people were their friends. After the bishops had deposed Paul of Samosata, he could not be expelled from the episcopal house till the aid of the emperor Aurelian was called in, and he may be supposed to have been offended at him, for his having been in the interest of his rival Zenobia. This could not have been necessary, if the majority of his people had not been with him, and therefore, if his deposition had not, in fact, been unjust:

As to Photinus, he was so popular in his diocese, that his solemn deposition by three councils could not remove him from his see, "He defended himself," says Tillemont (*History of the Arians*, Vol. I. p. 116) "against the authority of the church, by the affection which
" his

“his people had for him, even to the year 351; “though his heresy began to appear as early as “342, or 343, according to Socrates, and the “Eusebians condemned it in one of their confessions of faith, in 345.” At length the emperor Constantius, a zealous Arian, thought it necessary to interfere, and get him banished in a council held at Sirmium itself. I may add, that Marcellus of Ancyra left Galatia full of unitarians, as Basil afterwards found to his cost. Had the body of christians in those times been generally trinitarians, we dissenters, who are pretty much in the same situation with unitarians in those times, not having the countenance of government, know well how ready the common people would have been to take an active part in those affairs.

“Sabellianism,” which was precisely the same thing with unitarianism in former times, Dr. Lardner says (Credibility, Vol. IV. p. 606) “must “have been very agreeable to the apprehensions “of many people. Eusebius speaks of its increasing very much in Egypt, when Dionysius “of Alexandria opposed it. According to Athanasius, the occasion of Dionysius writing “upon that head, was, that *some of the bishops “of Africa followed the doctrine of Sabellius, and “they prevailed to such a degree, that the Son of “God was scarce any longer preached in the churches.”*

It is also remarkable that the first treatise that was ever written against the unitarian doctrine was that of Tertullian against Praxeas, with whom he was particularly provoked, on account of the active part he had taken against Montanus, in getting him excommunicated and expelled from the church of Rome. This, says Le Sueur, was the cause of the bitterness with which Tertullian wrote against him.—Now there were treatises against the Gnostics in a much earlier period. Why then were none written against the unitarians, since pure unitarianism was certainly as old as Gnosticism; and if it had been deemed a *heresy* at all, it would certainly have been thought to be of the most alarming nature, as it is considered at present? In the opinions of those who are now called *orthodox*, the Gnostics thought much more honourably of Christ than the unitarians did. The unitarians were likewise much more numerous, and in the bosom of the church itself, a circumstance which might be expected to render them peculiarly obnoxious.

No. II.

I Shall extend this *Appendix*, in order to observe that, to the many false charges and insinuations of Dr. Horsley, which are noticed in the preceding Letters, he has added another to exculpate himself for the contempt which he had expressed of dissenters. "If you are still," he says, p. 172. "disposed to be indignant about "this harmless word" (conventicle) "recollect, I beseech you, with what respect you "have yourself treated the venerable body to "which I belong, the clergy of the establishment. You divide it into two classes only, "the ignorant and the insincere. Have I no share "in this opprobrium of my order? Have I no "right to be indignant in my turn?"

I do not pretend to recollect all that I have written, but I have such a consciousness of never having *meant*, or *intended to say*, what Dr. Horsley here charges me with, that I will venture to assert, that he cannot have any more authority for this, than for the privileges granted to the Jewish christians of Jerusalem on their abandoning the ceremonies of their old religion. That many of the clergy are *ignorant*, none can deny; because it is true of every body of clergy in the

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world;


world; and that some are *insincere*, may also without great uncharitableness, be supposed of any large body of men. Of one kind of insincerity the fact is too evident to be denied of several of the members of the church of England. For no man can be sincere in professing to believe what he openly writes against. And are there not persons in communion with the church of England, who publicly controvert the articles of it; which articles, while they continue in the church, and especially if they officiate in it, they virtually profess to believe. That many are both learned and sincere, I have acknowledged with respect to the clergy of the church of Rome, and I think I could hardly say less of those of the church of England. I shall, therefore, consider this charge of Dr. Horsley, as a mere *calumny*, till he shall produce some evidence for it; and if, in any of my writings, he can find sufficient authority for his accusation, I here retract what I advanced, and ask pardon for it.

The *learning* of many divines in the church of Rome, and that of England, I have never denied. Bishop Hurd I have stiled *learned* and *able*, though, in my opinion, nothing can be weaker than his reasoning on the subject of church establishments. As to *sincerity*, I have always been ready to acknowledge it, with respect to both the churches. As one proof of this, I shall quote a passage from the *Sermon* I preached on *accepting the pastoral office* in this place, p. 30.

“ Think not that the most fervent zeal for what
“ are apprehended to be the genuine doctrines of
“ the gospel is at all inconsistent with true *christian*
“ *charity*, which always judges of particular
“ persons according to the advantages they have
“ enjoyed, and of the final state of men by their
“ *sincerity* only. And for my own part, I have
“ no doubt, but that, though the church of
“ Rome be the proper *Antichrist* of the apostles,
“ not only innumerable zealous papists, but
“ even some popes themselves, and since the re-
“ formation, will sit down with Luther, with Cal-
“ vin, and with Socinus, in the kingdom of our
“ Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Known unto
“ God alone are the hearts of men; and the
“ man who honestly pursues truth, and who
“ acts according to the best lights that God
“ gives him an opportunity of acquiring, will be
“ he whom the *God of truth* and uprightness will
“ approve; and none will suffer a greater or
“ more just condemnation than those who *bold*
“ *the truth in unrighteousness*. Much rather would
“ I be in the case of many worthy persons in the
“ church of England, or the church of Rome,
“ who at the same time that they are fully sen-
“ sible of the corruptions and errors of the system
“ in which they are entangled, are not able to
“ break their chains, than, from a spirit the re-
“ verse of that of the gospel, make an improper
“ use of my own liberty by insulting them.”

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Will Dr. Horsley himself say this after me? With respect to real candour, few, I think, will go greater lengths than I have done. He charges me with many instances of *wilful misrepresentation*, which is certainly a charge of *insincerity*; whereas I have not charged him with any, though I might have done it with much greater appearance of reason. With respect to *ignorance*, viz. of what relates to the subject of this controversy, with which he likewise repeatedly charges me, I own that I return the accusation, and let our readers judge between us.



No. III.

HAVING shewn these *Letters* to some of my friends, and been favoured with their remarks, I wish to add the following explanations.

I. P. 30. A passage has been pointed out to me in Grotius (*Opera*, vol. II. p. 5.) in which he speaks of the Nazarenes as "holding the common faith of other christians with respect to Christ, which the Ebionites did not." But as the opinion of the Ebionites, of which he is there speaking, was that Christ was the son of Joseph, all that can be inferred from the passage, is that, in his opinion, the Nazarenes differed from the Ebionites by believing the doctrine of the miraculous conception. By the *common faith of christians*, in that early age (supposing him to have had a view to the doctrine concerning Christ, more extensively considered) Grotius, no doubt, meant his own opinion, which was far from that *high orthodoxy*, which Dr. Horsley ascribes to the Nazarenes.

Grotius also says that "it is well observed by Sulpitius Severus, that all the Jewish christians till the time of Adrian, held that Christ was God, though they observed the law of Moses," in the passage which I have quoted

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from

from him, p. 41. But the sense in which Gro-
 tius understood the term *God* in this place, must
 be explained by his own sentiments concerning
 Christ. As to Sulpitius himself, he must be
 considered as having said nothing more than
 that "almost all the Jews at Jerusalem were chris-
 " tians, though they observed the law of Moses."
 This writer's mere assertion that the Jewish
 christians held Christ to be God, in the proper
 sense of the word, unsupported by any reasons for
 it, is even less to be regarded than that of Euse-
 bius.

II. The latter part of the quotation from
 Chrysostom, p. 93. will admit of a translation
 more favourable to my purpose, by introducing
 a parenthesis, and a note of interrogation, as
 follows: "How could men who were then first
 " taken from their altars, idols, &c. (for such
 " was the worship of the heathens) and being
 " then first brought off from these abominations,
 " readily receive sublime doctrines?"

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